GREENBELT PLAN

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context

The Golden Horseshoe is one of the fastest growing regions in North America.

The Greenbelt is a cornerstone of Ontario's proposed Greater Golden Horseshoe Growth Plan which is an overarching strategy that will provide clarity and certainty about urban structure, where and how future growth should be accommodated, and what must be protected for current and future generations.

The Greenbelt Plan identifies where urbanization should not occur in order to provide permanent protection to the agricultural land base and the ecological features and functions occurring on this landscape.

The Greenbelt Plan includes lands within, and builds upon the ecological protections provided by, the Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP) and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP). It also complements and supports other provincial level initiatives such as the Parkway Belt West Plan and the Rouge North Management Plan.

The Protected Countryside lands identified in this Greenbelt Plan are intended to enhance the spatial extent of agriculturally and environmentally protected lands currently covered by the NEP and the ORMCP while at the same time improving linkages between these areas and the surrounding major lake systems and watersheds. Collectively, the lands in these three plans form the Greenbelt. The Protected Countryside (as shown on Schedule 1 of this Greenbelt Plan) is made up of an Agricultural System and a Natural System, together with a series of settlement areas.

The Agricultural System is made up of specialty crop, prime agricultural and rural areas. The Natural System identifies lands that support both natural heritage and hydrologic features and functions. Both systems maintain connections to the broader agricultural and natural systems of southern Ontario.

The settlement areas, identified as Towns/Villages and Hamlets, vary in size, diversity and intensity of uses and are found throughout the Protected Countryside.

While providing permanent agricultural and environmental protection, the Greenbelt also contains important natural resources and supports a wide range of recreational and tourism uses, areas and opportunities together with a vibrant and evolving agricultural and rural economy.

The schedules to this Greenbelt Plan show lands, settlements, roads and natural systems outside of the Greenbelt Area. This Plan does not apply to lands beyond the Greenbelt Area as shown on Schedule 1.

Within the vast majority of south-central Ontario and substantial portions of the Greater Golden Horseshoe beyond the Greenbelt Area, there are extensive agricultural areas, natural and hydrologic features and functions, and other significant resources. The lack of inclusion within the Greenbelt Area does not imply any lesser importance or recognition of the full array of natural environmental and resource attributes found in these areas. Rather, all lands outside of the Greenbelt Area will continue to be governed by current, and potentially future, planning frameworks and regimes which manage land use in Ontario. In addition, no preference for urban structure or the allocation of residential and employment growth beyond the Greenbelt should be inferred from the Greenbelt Plan, as it is intended that these matters be addressed by the planning system and the proposed Growth Plan.

1.2 Vision and Goals

1.2.1 Vision

The Greenbelt is a broad band of permanently protected land which:

- Protects against the loss and fragmentation of the agricultural land base and supports agriculture as the predominant land use;
- Gives permanent protection to the natural heritage and water resource systems that sustain ecological and human health and that form the environmental framework around which major urbanization in south-central Ontario will be organized; and
- Provides for a diverse range of economic and social activities associated with rural communities, agriculture, tourism, recreation and resource uses.

1.2.2 Goals

To enhance our urban and rural areas and overall quality of life by promoting the following matters within the Protected Countryside:

1. Agricultural Protection

a) Protection of the *specialty crop area* land base while allowing supportive infrastructure and value added uses necessary for sustainable agricultural uses and activities;

b) Support for the Niagara Peninsula *specialty crop area* as a destination and centre of agriculture focused on the agri-food sector and agri-tourism related to grape and tender fruit production;

c) Protection of *prime agricultural areas* by preventing further fragmentation and loss of the agricultural land base caused by lot creation and the redesignation of *prime agricultural areas*;

d) Provision of the appropriate flexibility to allow for *agriculture*, *agriculture-related* and *secondary uses*, *normal farm practices* and an evolving agricultural/rural economy; and

e) Increasing certainty for the agricultural sector to foster long-term investment in, improvement to, and management of the land.

2. Environmental Protection

a) Protection, maintenance and enhancement of natural heritage, hydrologic and *landform* features and functions, including protection of habitat for flora and fauna and particularly species at risk;

b) Protection and restoration of natural and open space connections between the Oak Ridges Moraine, the Niagara Escarpment, Lake Ontario, Lake Simcoe and the major river valley lands, while also maintaining connections to the broader natural systems of southern Ontario beyond the Golden Horseshoe such as the Great Lakes Coast, the Carolinian Zone, the Lake Erie Basin, the Kawartha Highlands and the Algonquin to Adirondacks Corridor;

c) Protection, improvement or restoration of the quality and quantity of ground and surface water and the hydrological integrity of watersheds; and

d) Provision of long-term guidance for the management of natural heritage and water resources when contemplating such matters as development, infrastructure, open space planning and management, aggregate rehabilitation and private or public stewardship programs.

3. Culture, Recreation and Tourism

a) Support for the conservation and promotion of cultural heritage resources;

b) Provision of a wide range of publicly accessible built and natural settings for recreation including facilities, parklands, open space areas,

trails and water-based/shoreline uses that support hiking, angling and other recreational activities; and

c) Enabling continued opportunities for sustainable tourism development.

4. Settlement Areas

a) Support for a strong rural economy by allowing for the social, economic and service functions through the residential, institutional and commercial/industrial uses needed by the current and future population within the Greenbelt, particularly within settlements; and

b) Sustaining the character of the countryside and rural communities.

5. Infrastructure and Natural Resources

a) Support for infrastructure which achieves the social and economic aims of the Greenbelt and the proposed Growth Plan while seeking to minimize environmental impacts;

b) Recognition of the benefits of protecting renewable and non-renewable natural resources within the Greenbelt; and

c) Provision for the availability and sustainable use of those resources critical to the region's social, environmental, economic and growth needs.

1.3 General Authority

This Plan derives its authority from the *Greenbelt Act, 2005*, which authorizes the Lieutenant Governor in Council, by regulation, to designate an area of land as the Greenbelt Area. The *Greenbelt Act, 2005* further authorizes the Lieutenant Governor in Council to establish a Greenbelt Plan for all or part of the Greenbelt Area.

The Greenbelt Plan applies to the lands delineated in Ontario Regulation XX/XX, as shown on Schedule 1.

1.4 How to Use this Plan

1.4.1 General

This Greenbelt Plan builds upon the existing policy framework established in the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), issued under section 3 of the *Planning Act*, and its implementation through municipal official plan policies and maps.

Based on the above, this Greenbelt Plan must be read in conjunction with all other applicable land use planning policy, regulations and/or standards, as amended from time to time. Such documents include but are not limited to: the PPS; Minister's zoning orders under section 47 of the *Planning Act*; the proposed Greater Golden Horseshoe Growth Plan; other provincial land use plans; upper, lower and single-tier municipal official plans; zoning by-laws; regulations including those under the *Conservation Authorities Act*, as well as other pertinent legislation (e.g. the federal *Fisheries Act)* and regulations. Where more specific provincial plans or regulations apply to lands within the Greenbelt, including plans under the *Ontario Planning and Development Act, 1994*, the more specific plan or regulation shall prevail.

1.4.2 Structure of the Plan

The Greenbelt Plan consists of:

Section 1.0 – Introduction: Describes the context for the Greenbelt Plan in southern Ontario and introduces the Plan's Vision and Goals. The legislative authority for the Plan and how it is to be used and applied within the land use planning system are also set out in this section.

Section 2.0 – Greenbelt Plan: Describes the lands governed by the Greenbelt Plan, which include the NEP Area, the Oak Ridges Moraine Area, the Parkway Belt West Plan Area and lands designated Protected Countryside in this Plan. It describes how lands in the three existing provincial plans are affected by this Plan, and that lands designated as Protected Countryside within the Greenbelt Area are subject to the entire Greenbelt Plan.

Section 3.0 – Geographic Specific Policies in the Protected Countryside: Sets out the three key policy areas in the Protected Countryside designation that are spatially based: the Agricultural System, the Natural System and *Settlement Areas*.

The Agricultural System is comprised of *specialty crop areas*, *prime agricultural areas* and *rural areas*. While the Greenbelt Plan identifies the boundaries of the *specialty crop areas*, it relies on municipal official plans to delineate *prime agricultural areas* and *rural areas*.

The Natural System is comprised of the Natural Heritage System, Water Resource System and *key natural heritage features* and *key hydrologic features*. The Natural Heritage System is not a designation in and of itself with a list of permitted uses. Rather, it functions as an overlay on top of the *prime agricultural* and/or *rural area* designations contained in municipal official plans. As such, permitted uses are those set out within the *prime agricultural area* and *rural area* designations of municipal official plans, subject to constraints of the Natural System.

Settlement Areas are comprised of Towns/Villages and Hamlets. Although this Plan shows boundaries for Towns/Villages, Hamlets are only shown as symbols. In both cases, this Plan defers to municipal official plans for the detailed delineation of settlement boundaries. Further, this Plan does not apply to lands within the boundaries of Towns/Villages and Hamlets, as they existed on the day this Plan came into effect. Municipal official plans will continue to govern land use within these settlements. However, where expansions to settlements permitted by this Plan are proposed, the policies of this Plan apply to such expansions.

Lands in the Protected Countryside will be within one of the following policy areas: *Specialty Crop Areas*, *Prime Agricultural Areas*, *Rural Areas*, Towns/Villages, Hamlets or Shoreline Areas. In addition, lands may also be subject to the policies of the Natural Heritage System and *key natural heritage features* and *key hydrologic features*.

Also described in this section are policies regarding parkland, open space and trails in the Greenbelt.

Section 4.0 – General Policies in the Protected Countryside: Describes the general policies that apply across the Protected Countryside. These policies are based on certain uses (non-agricultural uses, recreation and tourism uses, *infrastructure*, natural resource uses, cultural heritage resources and *existing uses*). This section also contains policies on lot creation.

Section 5.0 – Implementation: Provides a description of:

- The status and effect of the Plan;
- How the Plan is to be implemented;
- The relationship of the Plan to the land use planning system;
- How boundaries are to be interpreted;
- The process for reviewing and amending the Plan;
- Monitoring and performance measures; and
- The Greenbelt Council.

1.4.3 How to Read this Plan

The following is a brief description of how this Plan, read in its entirety, affects a specific area, land use or *development*/*infrastructure*/resource proposal.

1. Refer to Schedule 1 to determine if the lands are located within the NEP Area or the Oak Ridges Moraine Area. If the property is located in either of these areas, the policies of the NEP or the ORMCP continue to apply as set out in section 2.0. If the lands are located in the Protected Countryside designation, then the entirety of the Greenbelt Plan's relevant

policies apply. Determine if the lands are located within the Parkway Belt West Plan. If so, the policies of the Parkway Belt West Plan continue to apply as set out in section 2.0.

2. If lands are within the Protected Countryside, determine which of the Geographic Specific Policies apply as described in section 3.0. This is accomplished by a series of steps.

   Refer to Schedules 1, 2 and 3 of this Plan to determine if the lands are located within a *specialty crop area* or a Town/Village or Hamlet. If lands are located in a *specialty crop area*, refer to the policies of this Plan. If lands are located in a Town/Village or Hamlet, refer to municipal official plans (unless it is a proposed expansion of a settlement, in which case refer to the policies of this Plan). Also, refer to the General Policies of this Plan as described below.

   If the lands are not in a *specialty crop area* or Town/Village or Hamlet, determine in which municipality the lands are located and refer to the municipal official plans that are in effect to determine if the lands are designated prime agricultural or rural (or a similar designation to rural). Once this determination is made, refer to the Agricultural System policies of this Plan (section 3.1) to determine if there are any additional restrictions or requirements relating to *prime agricultural areas* or *rural areas*.

   Refer to Schedule 4 of this Plan to determine if the lands are located within the Natural Heritage System. If so, refer to the Natural System policies of section 3.2, which is an overlay on top of the *prime agricultural* and/or *rural area* designations of municipal official plans.

   Refer to municipal official plans, data or information on natural features from provincial, municipal and agency (e.g. conservation authority) sources, and conduct a preliminary assessment of the property to determine if there are any *key natural heritage features* or *key hydrologic features* on the lands. If so, refer to the natural features policies of section 3.2.4 of this Plan.

3. Determine which general policies in section 4.0 may apply to the lands based on the type of use or whether lot creation is proposed.

4. Determine how the policies of the Plan apply to matters that may be subject to transition under the provisions of the *Greenbelt Act, 2005*, in conjunction with the Implementation policies in section 5.0.

5. Determine how the other Implementation policies in section 5.0 may apply to the lands including how this Plan works with other applicable legislation,

regulations, policy and planning documents and/or whether there are any boundary interpretation policies to be considered.

2.0 GREENBELT PLAN

The Greenbelt Area, as defined by Ontario Regulation XX/XX, is governed by this Greenbelt Plan, which includes lands within the NEP Area, the Oak Ridges Moraine Area, the Parkway Belt West Plan Area, and lands designated as Protected Countryside by this Plan.

2.1 Lands within the Oak Ridges Moraine Area

The requirements of the ORMCP (Ontario Regulation 140/02), made under the *Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, 2001*, continue to apply and the Protected Countryside policies do not apply with the exception of section 3.3.

Where, by the operation of subsection 2(4) of the ORMCP, lands are within the Oak Ridges Moraine Area but are not governed by the policies of the ORMCP, the lands are deemed to be within the Protected Countryside and all of the polices of the Greenbelt Plan apply to the lands.

2.2 Lands within the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area

The requirements of the NEP, established under the *Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act*, continue to apply and the Protected Countryside policies do not apply with the exception of section 3.3.

2.3 Lands within the Parkway Belt West Plan Area

The requirements of the Parkway Belt West Plan, deemed to be a development plan under the *Ontario Planning and Development Act, 1994* continue to apply to lands within the Parkway Belt West Plan Area and the Protected Countryside policies do not apply with the exception of sections 3.2 and 3.3.

2.4 Lands within the Protected Countryside Area

Lands within the Protected Countryside, as shown on Schedule 1, are subject to the entirety of this Greenbelt Plan.

3.0 GEOGRAPHIC SPECIFIC POLICIES IN THE PROTECTED COUNTRYSIDE

There are three types of Geographic Specific Policies that apply to specific lands within the Protected Countryside: Agricultural System, Natural System and *Settlement Areas.* In addition there are General Policies, and Parkland, Open Space and Trails policies that apply to the Protected Countryside, however, the Parkland, Open Space and Trails policies apply across the Greenbelt.

3.1 Agricultural System

3.1.1 Description

The Protected Countryside contains an Agricultural System that provides a continuous and permanent land base necessary to support long-term agricultural production and economic activity. Many of the farms within this system also contain important natural heritage and hydrologic features, and the stewardship of these farms has facilitated both environmental and agricultural protection. The Agricultural System is therefore integral to the long-term sustainability of the Natural Heritage System within the Protected Countryside. It is through evolving agricultural and environmental approaches and practices that this relationship can continue and improve.

The Agricultural System is made up of *specialty crop areas*, *prime agricultural areas* and *rural areas.* The Agricultural System includes expansive areas where prime agricultural and specialty crop lands predominate and active agricultural and related activities are ongoing. The delineation of the Agricultural System was guided by a variety of factors including a land evaluation area review (LEAR) which assessed such matters as soils, climate, productivity and land fragmentation; the existing pattern of agriculturally protected lands set out in municipal official plans; and a consideration of projected future growth patterns.

There are two ***specialty crop areas***: the Niagara Peninsula Tender Fruit and Grape Area and the Holland Marsh. The delineation of the Niagara Peninsula Tender Fruit and Grape Area (see Schedule 2) is based on provincial soil and climate analysis of current and potential tender fruit and grape production areas. The Holland Marsh boundary is based on provincial muck soil analysis and current agricultural production in both the Region of York and the County of Simcoe (see Schedule 3).

Prime agricultural areas, are those lands designated as such within municipal official plans.

Rural areas are those lands outside of *settlement areas* which are not *prime agricultural areas* and which are generally designated as rural or open space within municipal official plans. *Rural areas* are typically characterized by a

mixture of agricultural lands, natural features and recreational and historic rural land uses.

Municipalities may amend their municipal official plan designations for *prime agriculture areas* and *rural areas* when they bring their official plans into conformity with the Greenbelt Plan, subject to the criteria identified in the municipal implementation policies of section 5.2.

3.1.2 Specialty Crop Area Policies

For lands falling within the *specialty crop area* of the Protected Countryside the following policies shall apply:

1. Within *specialty crop areas*, *normal farm practices* and a full range of a*gricultural, agriculture-related* and *secondary uses* are supported and permitted.

2. Lands within *specialty crop areas* shall not be redesignated in municipal official plans for non-agricultural uses, with the exception of those uses permitted in the general policies of sections 4.2 to 4.6.

3. Towns/Villages and Hamlets are not permitted to expand into *specialty crop areas*.

4. New land uses, including the creation of lots, as permitted by the policies of this Plan, and new or expanding livestock facilities shall comply with the *minimum distance separation formulae*.

3.1.3 Prime Agricultural Area Policies

For lands falling within the *prime agricultural area* of the Protected Countryside the following policies shall apply:

1. Within *prime agricultural areas*, as identified in municipal official plans, *normal farm practices* and a full range of *agricultural*, *agriculture-related* and *secondary uses* are supported and permitted.

2. *Prime agricultural areas* shall not be redesignated in municipal official plans for non-agricultural uses except for:
   a) Refinements to the prime agricultural and rural area designations, subject to the criteria identified in the municipal implementation policies of section 5.2; or
   b) *Settlement area* expansions subject to the *settlement area* policies of section 3.4.

3. Other uses may be permitted subject to the general policies of sections 4.2 to 4.6.

4. New land uses and the creation of lots, as permitted by the policies of this Plan, and new or expanding livestock facilities shall comply with the minimum distance separation formulae.

3.1.4 Rural Area Policies

For lands falling within the *rural area* of the Protected Countryside the following policies shall apply:

1. *Rural areas* support, and provide the primary locations for a range of recreational, tourism, institutional and resource-based commercial/ industrial uses. They also contain many historic highway commercial, non-farm residential and other uses which, in more recent times, would be generally directed to *settlement areas* but which are recognized as *existing uses* by this Plan and allowed to continue and expand subject to the *existing use* policies of section 4.5. Notwithstanding this policy or the policies of section 5.3, municipal official plans may be more restrictive than this Plan with respect to the types of uses permitted within *rural areas*.

2. *Rural areas* also contain many existing agricultural operations. *Existing* and new *agricultural uses* are allowed and *normal farm practices* and a full range of *agricultural, agriculture-related* and *secondary uses* are supported and permitted.

3. *Settlement area* expansions are permitted into *rural areas*, subject to the *settlement area* policies of section 3.4.

4. Other uses may be permitted subject to the general policies of sections 4.1 to 4.6.

5. *New multiple units or multiple lots for residential dwellings*, (e.g. estate residential subdivisions and adult lifestyle or retirement communities), whether by plan of subdivision, condominium or severance, shall not be permitted in *rural areas*. Notwithstanding this policy, municipal official plans may be more restrictive than this Plan with respect to residential severances and shall provide guidance for the creation of lots within the *rural area* not addressed in this Plan. Regardless, new lots for any use shall not be created if the creation would extend or promote strip development.

6. New land uses, the creation of lots (as permitted by the policies of this Plan), and new and expanding livestock facilities shall comply with the *minimum distance separation formulae*.

3.1.5 External Connections

The Greenbelt Agricultural System is connected both functionally and economically to the prime agricultural resource lands and agri-food sector beyond the boundaries of the Greenbelt.

To support the connections between the Greenbelt's Agricultural System and the prime agricultural resource areas of southern Ontario, municipalities, farming organizations, and other agencies and levels of government are encouraged to consider how activities and changes in land use, both within and abutting the Greenbelt, relate to the broader agricultural system and economy of southern Ontario and they should plan appropriately to ensure both functional and economic connections are maintained and strengthened.

3.2 Natural System

3.2.1 Description

The Protected Countryside contains a Natural System that provides a continuous and permanent land base necessary to support human and ecological health in the Greenbelt and beyond. The Natural System policies protect areas of natural heritage, hydrologic and/or *landform* features, which are often functionally inter-related and which collectively support biodiversity and overall ecological integrity.

The Natural System within the Protected Countryside functions at three scales:

1. The system builds upon and is connected to other Golden Horseshoe scale natural systems as identified within the NEP and the ORMCP (see Appendix 1);

2. The system is connected to and/or supports broader natural systems in southern Ontario such as the Great Lakes Coast, Carolinian Zone and the Kawartha Highlands; and

3. The system is supported by a multitude of natural and hydrologic features and functions found within the Golden Horseshoe but outside of the NEP and the ORMCP. In particular, the numerous watersheds, subwatersheds and groundwater resources, including the network of tributaries that support the major river systems identified in this Plan, are critical to the long-term health and sustainability of water resources and biodiversity and overall ecological integrity. The analysis and management of the Greenbelt's water resources must therefore be integrated with the

management of water resources outside the Greenbelt. Municipal official plans and related resource management efforts by conservation authorities and others shall continue to assess and plan for these natural and hydrologic features in a comprehensive and integrated manner, which builds upon and supports the natural systems identified within the Greenbelt.

The Natural System is made up of a Natural Heritage System and a Water Resource System that often coincides given ecological linkages between terrestrial and water based functions.

The **Natural Heritage System** (see Schedule 4) includes areas of the Protected Countryside with the highest concentration of the most sensitive and/or *significant* natural features and functions. These areas need to be managed as a connected and integrated natural heritage system given the functional inter-relationships between them, and the fact this system builds upon the natural systems contained in the NEP and the ORMCP. Together with the landscape surrounding the Greenbelt, these systems currently comprise, and function as, a connected natural heritage system.

The **Water Resource System** is made up of both ground and surface water features and their associated functions, which provide the water resources necessary to sustain healthy aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems and human water consumption. The ORMCP and NEP include very significant elements of, and are fundamental to, the Water Resource System. The areas to which these plans apply contain primary recharge, headwater and discharge areas, together with major drinking water aquifers, within the Greenbelt.

The Protected Countryside includes several areas of hydrologic significance, including:

- The upper reaches of watersheds draining to Lake Ontario to the west of the Niagara Escarpment;
- Lands around the primary discharge zones along the toe of the Escarpment and base of the Oak Ridges Moraine;
- The major river valleys that flow from the Oak Ridges Moraine and the Niagara Escarpment to Lake Ontario;
- The portions of the Lake Simcoe watershed and the former Lake Algonquin Shoreline within York and Durham Regions; and
- The former Lake Iroquois shoreline in Durham and Niagara Regions.

These areas of hydrological significance incorporated into the Greenbelt function together with other hydrological features both within the Greenbelt and within the remainder of watersheds that extend outside of the Greenbelt to form water resource systems.

3.2.2 Natural Heritage System Policies

For lands within the Natural Heritage System of the Protected Countryside the following policies shall apply:

1. The full range of existing and new *agricultural, agricultural-related* and *secondary uses* and *normal farm practices* are permitted subject to the policies of 3.2.2.2 below.

2. New buildings or structures for *agriculture*, *agricultural-related* and *secondary uses* are not subject to the Natural Heritage System policies below, but are subject to the policies on *key natural heritage features* and *key hydrologic features* as identified in the natural features policies of section 3.2.4.

3. New *development* or *site alteration* in the Natural Heritage System (as permitted by the policies of this Plan) shall demonstrate that:
    a) There will be no negative effects on *key natural heritage features* or *key hydrologic features* or their functions;
    b) *Connectivity* between *key natural heritage features and key hydrologic features* is maintained, or where possible, enhanced for the movement of native plants and animals across the landscape;
    c) The removal of other natural features not identified as *key natural heritage features and key hydrologic features* should be avoided. Such features should be incorporated into the planning and design of the proposed use wherever possible; and
    d) The disturbed area of any site does not exceed 25 percent, and the impervious surface does not exceed 10 percent, of the *total developable area*, except for uses described in and governed by sections 4.1.2 and 4.3.2. With respect to golf courses, the disturbed area shall not exceed 40 percent of the site.

4. Where non-agricultural uses are contemplated within the Natural Heritage System, applicants shall demonstrate that:
    a) At least 30 percent of the *total developable area* of the site will remain or be returned to *natural self-sustaining vegetation*, recognizing that section 4.3.2 establishes specific standards for the uses described there;
    b) *Connectivity* along the system and between *key natural heritage features* or *key hydrologic features* located within 240 metres of each other is maintained or enhanced; and
    c) Buildings or structures do not occupy more than 25 percent of the *total developable area* and are planned to optimize the compatibility of the project with the natural surroundings.

5. The Natural Heritage System, including the natural features policies of section 3.2.4, does not apply within the existing boundaries of *settlement areas*, but does apply when considering expansions to settlements as permitted by the policies of this Plan. Municipalities should consider the Natural Heritage Systems connections within *settlement areas* when implementing municipal policies, plans and strategies.

6. When official plans are brought into conformity with this Plan, the boundaries of the Natural Heritage System may be refined, with greater precision, in a manner that is consistent with this Plan and the system shown on Schedule 4.

7. Where regulations or standards of other agencies or levels of government exceed the standards related to *key natural heritage features* or *key hydrologic features* in this Plan, such as may occur with *hazardous lands* under section 28 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* or with fisheries under the Federal *Fisheries Act*, the most restrictive provision or standard applies.

3.2.3 Water Resource System Policies

The following Water Resource System policies apply throughout the Protected Countryside:

1. All planning authorities shall provide for a comprehensive, integrated and long-term approach for the protection, improvement or restoration of the quality and quantity of water. Such an approach will consider all hydrologic features and functions and include a systems approach to the inter-relationships between and/or among recharge/discharge areas, aquifers, headwaters and surface waters (e.g. *lakes* as well as rivers and streams, including *intermittent streams*).

2. Watersheds are the most meaningful scale for hydrological planning, and municipalities together with conservation authorities should ensure that *watershed plans* are completed and used to guide planning and *development* decisions within the Protected Countryside.

3. Cross-jurisdictional and cross-watershed impacts need to be considered in the development of *watershed plans*. The development of *watershed plans* and watershed management approaches in the Protected Countryside should be integrated with watershed planning and management in the NEP and the ORMCP areas and beyond the Greenbelt.

4. Municipalities shall, in accordance with provincial direction related to the protection of source water, protect *vulnerable* surface and ground water

areas, such as wellhead protection areas, from *development* that may adversely affect the quality and quantity of ground and surface waters.

3.2.4 Key Natural Heritage Features and Key Hydrologic Features Policies

Key natural heritage features include:

- *Significant* habitat of *endangered species, threatened species* and *special concern species*;
- *Fish habitat*;
- *Wetlands*;
- *Life Science Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSIs)*;
- *Significant valleylands*;
- *Significant woodlands*;
- *Significant wildlife habitat*;
- *Sand barrens, savannahs and tallgrass prairies*; and
- *Alvars*

Key hydrologic features include:

- *Permanent and intermittent streams*;
- *Lakes* (and their littoral zones);
- *Seepage areas and springs*; and
- *Wetlands*

For lands within a *key natural heritage feature* or a *key hydrologic feature* in the Protected Countryside, the following policies shall apply:

1. *Development* or *site alteration* is not permitted in *key hydrologic features* and *key natural heritage features* within the Natural Heritage System, including any associated *vegetation protection zone*, with the exception of:
    a) Forest, fish and wildlife management;
    b) Conservation and flood or erosion control projects, but only if they have been demonstrated to be necessary in the public interest and after all alternatives have been considered; or
    c) *Infrastructure*, aggregate, recreational, shoreline and *existing uses*, as described by and subject to the general policies of section 4 of this Plan.

2. Beyond the Natural Heritage System within the Protected Countryside (as shown on Schedule 4), *key hydrologic features* are defined by and subject to the natural features policies of section 3.2.4.

3. Beyond the Natural Heritage System within the Protected Countryside (as shown on Schedule 4), *key natural heritage features* are not subject to the natural features policies of section 3.2.4 of this Plan, but are to be defined pursuant to, and subject to the policies of, the PPS.

4. In the case of *wetlands*, *seepage areas and springs*, *fish habitat*, *permanent and intermittent streams*, *lakes*, and *significant woodlands*, the minimum *vegetation protection zone* shall be a minimum of 30 metres wide measured from the outside boundary of the *key natural heritage feature* or *key hydrologic feature*.

5. A proposal for new *development* or *site alteration* within 120 metres of a *key natural heritage feature* within the Natural Heritage System or a *key hydrologic feature* anywhere within the Protected Countryside requires a natural heritage evaluation and hydrological evaluation, which identify a *vegetation protection zone* which:
    a) Is of sufficient width to protect the *key natural heritage feature* or *key hydrologic feature* and its functions from the impacts of the proposed change and associated activities that may occur before, during, and after, construction, and where possible, restore or enhance the feature and/or its function; and
    b) Is established to achieve, and be maintained as *natural self-sustaining vegetation*.

6. Expansions to existing agricultural buildings and structures and farm and non-farm dwellings, together with accessory uses, are permitted in *key natural heritage features*, subject to the *existing use* policies of section 4.5 of this Plan.

7. Notwithstanding the natural features policies of section 3.2.4 of this Plan, new buildings and structures for agricultural uses will be required to provide a 30 metre *vegetation protection zone* from a *key natural heritage feature* or *key hydrologic feature*, but may be exempted from the requirement of establishing a condition of *natural self-sustaining vegetation* if the land is, and will continue to be, used for agricultural purposes. Despite this exemption, agricultural uses should pursue best management practices to protect and/or restore *key hydrologic features* and functions.

3.2.5 External Connections

The Natural Heritage System is connected to local, regional and provincial scale natural heritage, water resource and agricultural systems beyond the boundaries of the Greenbelt.

To support the connections between the Greenbelt's Natural System and the local, regional and broader scale natural heritage systems of southern Ontario, such as the Lake Ontario shoreline, including its remaining coastal *wetlands*, the Great Lakes Coast, Lake Simcoe, the Kawartha Highlands, the Carolinian Zone and the Algonquin to Adirondack Corridor, the federal government, municipalities, conservation authorities, other agencies and stakeholders should:

1. Consider how activities and land use change both within and abutting the Greenbelt relate to the areas of external connections identified in this Plan;

2. Promote and undertake appropriate planning and design to ensure that external connections are maintained and/or enhanced; and

3. Undertake watershed based planning, which integrates supporting ecological systems with those systems contained in this Plan.

The river valleys that run through existing or approved urban areas and connect the Greenbelt to inland *lakes* and the Great Lakes are a key component of the long-term health of the Natural System. In recognition of the function of the urban river valleys, municipalities and conservation authorities should:

1. Continue with stewardship, remediation and appropriate park and trail initiatives which maintain and, to the extent possible, enhance the ecological features and functions found within these valley systems;

2. In considering land conversions or redevelopments in or abutting an urban river valley, strive for planning approaches that:
    a) Establish or increase the extent or width of *vegetation protection zones* in *natural self-sustaining vegetation*, especially in the most ecologically sensitive areas (i.e. near the stream and below the *stable top of bank*);
    b) Increase or improve *fish habitat* in streams and in the adjacent riparian lands;
    c) Include landscaping and habitat restoration that increase the ability of native plants and animals to use valley systems as both *wildlife habitat* and movement corridors; and
    d) Seek to avoid, minimize and/or mitigate impacts associated with the quality and quantity of urban run-off into the valley systems; and

3. Integrate watershed planning and management approaches for lands both within and beyond the Greenbelt.

In addition to the urban river valleys, portions of the former Lake Iroquois shoreline, particularly within Durham Region, traverse existing or approved urban areas. Municipalities should consider planning, design and construction practices that maintain or where possible enhance the size, diversity and *connectivity* of *key natural heritage features* and *key hydrologic features* and functions of those portions of the Lake Iroquois shoreline within their approved urban boundaries.

These external connections are generally depicted by a dotted green line on Schedule 1 and 4, but are not within the regulated boundary of the Greenbelt Plan.

3.2.6 The Rouge River Watershed and Park

The Rouge River Watershed is of particular significance within the Protected Countryside because of the extensive public investment in establishing the Rouge Park and the efforts of all levels of government in preparing the Rouge North Management Plan. The Rouge Watershed and the Little Rouge River serve as a vital ecological corridor linking the environmental systems of Lake Ontario to the Oak Ridges Moraine in this area of the Greater Toronto Area.

This plan identifies a 600 m wide corridor for the Little Rouge River as the main ecological corridor, between Lake Ontario and the southerly boundary of Oak Ridges Moraine Area, as well as several other Rouge River tributaries, in recognition of the longstanding commitment to establishing the Rouge Park.

Land use planning and resource management within those portions of the Rouge River watershed within the Protected Countryside shall comply with the provisions of both this Plan and the Rouge North Management Plan. In the case of a conflict between this Plan and the Rouge North Management Plan, the more restrictive policies apply. For those lands within the watershed north of Steeles Avenue, outside of the Protected Countryside, the Rouge North Management Plan and the Rouge North Implementation Manual, together with any municipal or conservation authority plans or initiatives which build on and/or support the Rouge North Management Plan, should be considered as the guiding land planning and resource management documents. For those lands within the Rouge Park south of Steeles Avenue, outside of the Protected Countryside, the Rouge Park Plan together with any municipal or conservation authority plans or initiatives which build on and/or support the Rouge Park Plan should be considered as the guiding land use planning and resource management documents.

3.3 Parkland, Open Space and Trails

3.3.1 Description

A system of parklands, open spaces, water bodies, and trails across the Greenbelt is necessary to provide opportunities for recreation, tourism and cultural/natural heritage appreciation, as well as to support environmental protection. This system currently supports a variety of passive and active uses, as well as health, economic and other quality of life benefits within the Greenbelt.

It should be recognized that parkland, open space and trails exist within surroundings of predominantly privately held lands. While private land owners

may, and do, adopt a collaborative approach with groups such as hiking and snowmobile associations to allow public access across portions of their property, this is only with the consent of the landowner.

Maintaining and expanding the supply of publicly accessible parkland, open space and trails is encouraged through strategic planning activities that identify, plan for and protect these resources for current and future generations. The planning and activity associated with parkland, open space and trail uses should maximize the opportunity to cooperate with all landowners.

Throughout the Greenbelt, there is existing public parkland and open space, as well as existing major trails such as the Bruce Trail, the Trans Canada Trail, the Niagara Greenway and the Lake Ontario Waterfront Trail. This system of parks and trails provides significant economic benefits and opportunities for a multitude of uses and activities compatible with the Greenbelt's vision and goals. This system should serve as a base for future decisions on parkland and open space use and trail development.

3.3.2 Parkland, Open Space and Trail Policies

The Province should, in partnership with municipalities, conservation authorities, non-government organizations, and other interested parties:

1. Encourage the development of a system of publicly accessible parkland, open space and trails where people can pursue the types of recreational activities envisaged by this Plan, and to support the *connectivity* of the Natural Heritage System;

2. Encourage the development of a trail plan and a coordinated approach to trail planning and development in the Greenbelt to enhance key existing trail networks and to strategically direct more intensive activities away from sensitive landscapes; and

3. Promote good stewardship practices for public and private lands within the Greenbelt, including clear demarcation of where public access is permitted.

3.3.3 Municipal Parkland, Open Space and Trail Strategies

For all lands falling within the Protected Countryside, municipalities should:

1. Provide for a full range of publicly accessible, built and natural settings for recreation including facilities, parklands, open space areas, trails and water-based activities;

2. Develop and incorporate strategies (such as community-specific levels of provision) into official plans to guide the adequate provision of municipal recreation facilities, parklands, open space areas and trails;

3. Include the following considerations in municipal parkland and open space strategies:
   a) Providing for open space areas for current and future populations and promoting stewardship of open space areas;
   b) Providing facilities, parklands, open space areas and trails that particularly support an active, healthy community lifestyle;
   c) Identifying key areas or sites for the future development of major facilities that avoid sensitive landscapes;
   d) Identifying and targeting under-serviced areas for improved levels of protection; and
   e) Protecting the recreation and tourism values of waterfront areas as a high priority; and

4. Include the following considerations in municipal trail strategies:
   a) Preserving the continuous integrity of corridors (e.g. abandoned railway rights-of-way and utility corridors);
   b) Planning trails on a cross-boundary basis to enhance interconnectivity where practical;
   c) Incorporating the existing system of parklands and trails where practical;
   d) Restricting trail uses that are inappropriate to the reasonable capacity of the site (notwithstanding the ability to continue existing trails/uses);
   e) Providing for multi-use trail systems which establish a safe system for both motorized and non-motorized uses;
   f) Supporting and ensuring compatibility with agriculture; and
   g) Ensuring the protection of the sensitive *key natural heritage features* and *key hydrologic features* and functions of the landscape.

Provincial parks and conservation authority lands are also important components in the development of parkland, open space and trail strategies. Ongoing management of these lands for publicly accessible recreation, in keeping with environmental management plans and strategies for such areas and the policies of this Plan, is important in providing access to this system. Where geographic-specific park or public land management plans exist, municipalities, agencies and other levels of government must consider such plans when making decisions on land use or *infrastructure* proposals.

3.4 Settlement Areas

3.4.1 Description

Settlement areas within the Greenbelt support and provide significant economic, social and commercial functions to *prime agricultural areas* and *rural areas*. They are an integral part of the long-term economic and social sustainability of the Greenbelt and this Plan envisions that they continue to evolve and grow in keeping with their rural and/or existing character.

The *Settlement areas* have been placed into two categories: Towns/Villages, and Hamlets. These settlements vary significantly in both spatial and population size, diversity/intensity of uses, the type(s) of water and sewage services and the role they play within their municipalities. Settlements of all types are found throughout the Protected Countryside. Towns/Villages and Hamlets are identified on Schedule 1. To determine the exact designated boundaries, reference should be made to municipal official plans.

Towns/Villages have the largest concentrations of population, employment and *development* within the Protected Countryside and tend to be the central *settlement area(s)* for their respective municipality. Although most have full municipal water and sewer services, some only have a *municipal water service* and/or a combination of private and *municipal water services*. Towns/Villages are the focus of development and related economic and social activity.

Hamlets are substantially smaller than Towns/Villages and play a lesser role in accommodating concentrations of residential, commercial, industrial and institutional development. Further, they are typically serviced with individual on-site sewage and water services and thus are not locations to which growth should be directed.

3.4.2 Town/Village Policies

For lands within Town/Villages in the Protected Countryside, the following policies shall apply:

1. Towns/Villages, as identified in municipal official plans and within their approved boundaries as they existed on the date this Plan came into effect, continue to be governed by municipal official plans and related programs or initiatives and are not subject to the policies of this Plan, save for the external connections policies of section 3.2.5.

2. Municipalities are encouraged to continue their efforts to support the long-term vitality of these settlements through appropriate planning and economic development approaches which seek to maintain, intensify and/or revitalize these communities. This includes modest growth that is

compatible with the long-term role of these settlements as part of the Protected Countryside and the capacity to provide locally based sewage and water services.

3. *Settlement areas* outside the Greenbelt are not permitted to expand into the Greenbelt.

4. Extensions or expansions of services to *settlement areas* within the Protected Countryside shall be subject to the *infrastructure* policies of section 4.2 of this Plan, including the requirements regarding environmental assessments.

5. At the 10-year Greenbelt Plan review period, modest *settlement area* expansions may be possible for Towns/Villages, provided the proposed growth:
    a) Is on *municipal sewage* and *water services*;
    b) Would not exceed the assimilative and water production capacities of the local environment as determined on a watershed or subwatershed basis;
    c) Complies with any applicable *watershed plan*;
    d) Does not extend into the Natural Heritage System;
    e) Does not extend into *specialty crop areas*; and
    f) Appropriately implements the requirements of any other provincial and municipal policies, plans, strategies or regulations, including requirements for assessment of need, locational and similar considerations.

3.4.3 Hamlet Policies

For lands within Hamlets in the Protected Countryside, the following policies shall apply:

1. Hamlets, as identified in municipal official plans and within their approved boundaries as they existed on the date this Plan came into effect, continue to be governed by municipal official plans and related programs or initiatives and are not subject to the policies of this Plan, save for the external connections policies of section 3.2.5. This Plan permits infill and *intensification* of Hamlets subject to appropriate water and sewage services.

2. Outside of *specialty crop areas*, minor rounding out of Hamlet boundaries at the time of municipal conformity is also permitted in keeping with the character of the Hamlet. This rounding out is only permitted subject to the *infrastructure* policies contained in section 4.2 of this Plan and municipal official plans.

3.4.4 Additional Policies for *Settlement Area* Expansion

For *settlement areas* within the Protected Countryside, notwithstanding the policies of section 4.2.1, the following additional policies apply to municipally initiated *settlement area* expansion proposals:

1. Where a municipality had initiated the consideration of a settlement expansion prior to the date this Plan came into effect, such an expansion may be considered through the municipality's exercise to bring its official plan into conformity with this Plan as described in the municipal implementation policies of section 5.2. The proposed expansion shall:
    a) Prior to December 16, 2003, be supported by:
        i. A council resolution authorizing the consideration of such an expansion; and
        ii. The substantial completion of background studies or reports by municipal staff or planning consultants, or the expenditure of municipal funds on the consideration of such expansion.
    b) Not extend into the Natural Heritage System;
    c) Not extend into *specialty crop areas*; and
    d) Maintain the rural and/or existing character of the *settlement area*.

2. Clause 3.4.4.1 does not apply to:
    a) Those lands within the City of Pickering, in the Regional Municipality of Durham, bounded by the CPR Belleville Line in the south; the York-Durham Townline to the west; and West Duffins Creek to the east; and
    b) Those lands within the Town of Markham, in the Regional Municipality of York, bounded by the York-Durham Townline to the east; Steeles Avenue to the south; the Little Rouge River to the west; and, 16th Avenue to the north.

4.0 GENERAL POLICIES FOR THE PROTECTED COUNTRYSIDE

4.1 Non-Agricultural Uses

The *rural areas* of the Protected Countryside are intended to continue to accommodate a range of commercial, industrial and institutional uses serving the rural resource and agricultural sectors. They are also intended to support a range of recreation and tourism uses such as trails, parks, golf courses, bed and breakfasts and other tourism based accommodation, serviced playing fields and campgrounds, ski hills and resorts.

4.1.1 General Non-Agricultural Use Policies

For non-agricultural uses, the following policies apply:

1. With the exception of those uses permitted under the general policies of section 4.0 of this Plan and subject to the Natural System policies in section 3.2, non-agricultural uses are not permitted in the *specialty crop area* as shown on Schedule 2 of this Plan or within *prime agricultural areas* in the Protected Countryside as designated in municipal official plans.

2. Proposals for non-agricultural uses must demonstrate that:
    a) The use is appropriate for location in a *rural area*;
    b) The type of water and sewer servicing proposed is appropriate for the type of use;
    c) There are no *negative impacts* on *key natural heritage features* and/or *key hydrologic features* or their functions; and
    d) There are no *negative impacts* on the biodiversity or *connectivity* of the Natural Heritage System.

4.1.2 Recreational Use Policies

In addition to the non-agricultural use policies of section 4.1.1, recreational uses are also subject to the following policies:

1. Residential dwelling units, other than for an employee, shall not be permitted in association with recreational uses.

2. An application to establish or expand a *major recreational use* in the Natural Heritage System will be accompanied by a vegetation enhancement plan that incorporates planning, design, landscaping, and construction measures that:
    a) Maintain or, where possible, enhance the amount of *natural self-sustaining vegetation* on the site and the *connectivity* between adjacent *key natural heritage features* or *key hydrologic features*;
    b) Wherever possible, keep intermittent stream channels and drainage swales in a free-to-grow, low-maintenance condition;
    c) Minimize the application and use of pesticides and fertilizers; and
    d) Locate new *natural self-sustaining vegetation* in areas that maximize the *ecological value* of the area.

3. An application to expand or establish a *major recreational use* shall be accompanied by a conservation plan demonstrating how water use and nutrient and biocide will be kept to a minimum, including the establishment and monitoring of targets.

4. Small-scale structures for recreational uses (such as boardwalks, footbridges, fences, docks and picnic facilities) are permitted within *key*

natural heritage features and *key hydrologic features;* however, the *negative impacts* on these features should be minimized.

4.1.3 Shoreline Area Policies

The shorelines of Lake Ontario, Lake Simcoe, and Lake Scugog and other inland *lakes* contain substantial amounts of both seasonal and permanent residential *development*. The shoreline areas of *lakes* (including the littoral zones) are particularly important and sensitive given the *key natural heritage features* and functions and because of the *connectivity* that shorelines provide for flora and fauna. In addition, the shorelines support a wide range of recreational venues and opportunities, including trail systems such as the Lake Ontario Waterfront Trail.

For shoreline areas falling within the Protected Countryside, the following policies shall apply:

1. For the purposes of this Plan, shoreline areas are those areas where concentrations of existing or approved shoreline *development* are currently zoned and/or designated in municipal official plans, as of the date this Plan came into effect.

2. Subject to any municipal and agency planning requirements, minor rounding out, infill *development*, redevelopment and resort *development* is permitted in shoreline areas along Lake Ontario, Lake Simcoe, Lake Scugog and other inland *lakes*, subject to the following criteria:
    a) Municipalities and conservation authorities shall ensure that the *development* is integrated with existing or proposed parks and trails and/or does not constrain ongoing or planned stewardship and remediation efforts;
    b) The Natural System policies of section 3.2 of this Plan are applied;
    c) To the extent possible, such *development* enhances the ecological features and functions in shoreline areas;
    d) Proposals for land use conversions, redevelopments and/or resort *development* shall:
        i. Establish or increase the extent and width of a *vegetation protection zone* along a shoreline to a minimum of 30 metres;
        ii. Increase or expand the extent of *fish habitat* in the littoral zone;
        iii. Minimize erosion, sedimentation and the introduction of nutrient or other pollutants and promote planning, design and construction practices that maintain or improve water quality;

iv. Improve the efficiency of sewage disposal facilities in order to reduce nutrient inputs to groundwater and the lake; and

v. Integrate landscaping and habitat restoration into the design of the proposal to enhance the ability of native plants and animals to use the shoreline as both *wildlife habitat* and a movement corridor; and

e) The capacity of the receiving water body shall be determined considering inputs from both existing and approved development and available capacity shall be demonstrated. Such proposals shall comply with any relevant watershed or subwatershed study and in the case of Lake Simcoe, any such analysis must be considered in the context of the Lake Simcoe Environmental Management Strategy.

3. Notwithstanding the policies of section 4.1.3.2 (d), structures may be permitted in the vegetation protection zone and littoral zone subject to any municipal, agency or other requirements or restrictions, and provided the area occupied by such structures is minimized.

4.2 Infrastructure

Infrastructure is important to economic well-being, human health and quality of life in southern Ontario and the Greenbelt.

There is already extensive local and regional *infrastructure* within the Greenbelt to serve its settlements, agricultural and resource sectors and the rural economy. Existing *infrastructure* must be maintained and new *infrastructure* will be needed to continue serving existing and permitted land uses within the Greenbelt.

In addition, major *infrastructure* serving national, provincial and inter-regional needs traverses the Greenbelt. It is also anticipated that new and/or expanded facilities will be needed in the future to serve the substantial growth projected for southern Ontario.

4.2.1 General Infrastructure Policies

For lands falling within the Protected Countryside, the following policies shall apply:

1. All existing, expanded or new *infrastructure* subject to and approved under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*, the *Environmental Assessment Act*, the *Planning Act*, the *Aggregate Resources Act*, the *Telecommunications Act* or by the National or Ontario Energy Boards, or which receives a similar environmental approval, is permitted within the

Protected Countryside, subject to the policies of this section and provided it meets one of the following two objectives:

a) It supports agriculture, recreation and tourism, rural settlement areas, resource use or the rural economic activity that exists and is permitted within the Greenbelt; or
b) It serves the significant growth and economic development expected in southern Ontario beyond the Greenbelt by providing for the appropriate *infrastructure* connections among urban growth centres and between these centres and Ontario's borders.

2. The location and construction of *infrastructure* and expansions, extensions, operations and maintenance of *infrastructure* in the Protected Countryside, are subject to the following:
   a) Planning, design and construction practices shall minimize, wherever possible, the amount of the Greenbelt, and particularly the Natural Heritage System, traversed and/or occupied by such *infrastructure*;
   b) Planning, design and construction practices shall minimize, wherever possible, the *negative impacts* and disturbance of the existing landscape, including, but not limited to, impacts caused by light intrusion, noise and road salt;
   c) Where practicable, existing capacity and coordination with different *infrastructure* services is optimized so that the rural and existing character of the Protected Countryside and the overall urban structure for southern Ontario established by Greenbelt and any provincial growth management initiatives are supported and reinforced;
   d) New or expanding *infrastructure* shall avoid *key natural heritage features* or *key hydrologic features* unless need has been demonstrated and it has been established that there is no reasonable alternative; and
   e) Where *infrastructure* does cross the Natural Heritage System or intrude into or result in the loss of a *key natural heritage feature* or *key hydrologic feature*, including related *landform features*, planning, design and construction practices shall minimize *negative impacts* and disturbance on the features or their related functions, and where reasonable, maintain or improve *connectivity*.

3. *Infrastructure* serving the agricultural sector, such as agricultural irrigation systems, may need certain elements to be located within the *vegetation protection zone* of a *key natural heritage feature* or *key hydrologic feature*. In such instances, these elements of the *infrastructure* may be established within the feature itself or its associated *vegetation protection zone* but all reasonable efforts shall be made to keep such *infrastructure* out of *key*

natural heritage features or *key hydrologic features* or the *vegetation protection zones*.

4.2.2 Sewage and Water Infrastructure Policies

In addition to the above general infrastructure policies and the *settlement area* policies of section 3.4, the following policies apply to sewer and water *infrastructure* proposals:

1. Proposals for *infrastructure* within or crossing the Protected Countryside shall demonstrate that:
    a) Sewage and water servicing can be provided in a manner that does not negatively impact ecological features and functions, quality and quantity of ground and surface water, including stream baseflow, and is sufficient to accommodate the proposed use(s);
    b) Applicable recommendations, standards or targets within *watershed plans* and water budgets are reflected; and
    c) Any sewage and water servicing installation is planned, designed and constructed to minimize surface and groundwater disruption.

2. Where settlements do not currently have Great Lake or Lake Simcoe based water and sewage services, extensions to or expansions of existing Great Lake or Lake Simcoe based services to such settlements is not permitted, unless such servicing is required to address failed individual on-site sewage or water services or to ensure the protection of public health where it has been determined by a medical officer of health (or health authority) that there is a public health concern associated with existing services within the settlement. The capacity of the services provided in the these circumstances will be restricted to that required to service the affected existing settlement plus the capacity for potential *development* within the approved settlement boundary as it existed on the date this Plan came into effect.

3. Where settlements currently have, or have approvals for, Great Lake based water and/or sewer services as of the date this Plan came into effect, such services may be extended and expanded to service growth within an approved settlement boundary as it existed on the date this Plan came into effect. Where only Great Lake water exists or has been approved, corresponding *municipal sewage service* shall be required in order for any expansion of the current settlement boundary where such expansion would be permitted by this Plan.

4. Where settlement area expansions are contemplated by a municipality, the environmental assessment in support of expanded sewage and water services must be completed or approved prior to amending the boundaries

of the settlement within the municipal official plan. The expansion must not extend into the Natural Heritage System or the *specialty crop area*.

5. The extension of *municipal* or *private communal sewage* or *water services* outside of a settlement boundary shall only be permitted in the case of health issues or to service *existing uses* and the expansion thereof adjacent to the settlement. Notwithstanding the above, where *municipal water services* exist outside of *settlements areas*, *existing uses* within the service area boundary as defined by the environmental assessment may be connected to such a service.

6. New or expanded partial servicing, where site conditions are suitable for the long-term provision of such services, is only permitted in the following circumstances:
    a) Where such servicing is necessary to address failed individual on-site sewage or water services serving existing development; or
    b) To allow for infilling and *intensification* within *settlement areas* served by partial services as of the date this Plan came into effect.

7. In the siting of new municipal and other wells, consideration shall be given to the location of *vulnerable* areas.

4.2.3 Stormwater Management Infrastructure Policies

In addition to the above general infrastructure policies and the *settlement area* policies of section 3.4, the following policies apply to stormwater management *infrastructure* proposals:

1. Storm water management ponds are prohibited in *key natural heritage features* or *key hydrologic features* or their vegetation protected zones, except for those portions of the Protected Countryside that define the major river valleys that connect the Niagara Escarpment and Oak Ridges Moraine to Lake Ontario. In these areas, naturalized stormwater management ponds are permitted provided they are located a minimum of 30 metres away from the edge of the river/stream and in the *vegetation protection zones* of any abutting *key natural heritage features* or *key hydrologic features*.

2. Applications for *development* and *site alteration* in the Protected Countryside shall be accompanied by a storm water management plan which demonstrates that:
    a) Planning, design and construction practices will minimize vegetation removal, grading and soil compaction, sediment erosion and impervious surfaces;

b) Where appropriate, an integrated treatment approach shall be used to minimize stormwater management flows and structures through such measures as lot level controls and conveyance techniques such as grass swales; and
c) Applicable recommendations, standards or targets within *watershed plans* and water budgets are complied with.

3. The objectives of a stormwater management plan are to avoid, minimize and/or mitigate stormwater volume, contaminant loads and impacts to receiving water courses in order to:
   a) Maintain groundwater quality and flow and stream baseflow;
   b) Protect water quality;
   c) Minimize the disruption of pre-existing (natural) drainage patterns wherever possible;
   d) Prevent increases in stream channel erosion;
   e) Prevent any increase in flood risk; and
   f) Protect aquatic species and their habitat.

4.3 Natural Resources

4.3.1 Renewable Resource Policies

For lands falling within the Protected Countryside, the following policies shall apply:

1. Renewable resources are those non-agriculture-based natural resources that support uses and activities such as forestry, water taking, fisheries, conservation, and wildlife management.

2. Activities related to the use of renewable resources are permitted in the Protected Countryside, subject to the policies of this Plan and all other applicable legislation, regulations and municipal planning documents, including the PPS. All such uses shall be undertaken in accordance with the applicable recommendations, standards or targets of any relevant *watershed plan* or water budget.

3. Within a *key natural heritage feature* or *key hydrologic feature*, renewable natural resource activities should be carried out in a manner that maintains or, where possible, improves these features and their functions.

4.3.2 Non-Renewable Resource Policies

For lands within the Protected Countryside, the following policies shall apply:

1. Activities related to the use of non-renewable resources are permitted in the Protected Countryside, subject to all other applicable legislation,

regulations and municipal official plan policies and by-laws. The availability of mineral aggregate resources for long-term use will be determined in accordance with the PPS, except as provided below.

2. Non-renewable resources are those non-agriculture based natural resources that have a finite supply, including mineral aggregate resources. Aggregates, in particular, provide significant building materials for our communities and *infrastructure*, and the availability of aggregates close to market is important both for economic and environmental reasons.

3. Notwithstanding the Natural System policies of section 3.2 of this Plan, within the Natural Heritage System, *mineral aggregate operations* and wayside pits and quarries are subject to the following:
    a) No new *mineral aggregate operation* and no wayside pits and quarries, or any ancillary or accessory use thereto will be permitted in the following *key natural heritage features* and *key hydrologic features:*
        i. *Significant wetlands;*
        ii. *Significant* habitat *of endangered species* and *threatened species*; and
        iii. *Significant woodlands* unless the woodland is occupied by young plantation or early successional habitat (as defined by the Ministry of Natural Resources). In this case, the application must demonstrate that the specific provisions of policy 4.3.2.5 (c), (d) and 4.3.2.6 (c) have been addressed, and that they will be met by the operation;
    b) An application for a new *mineral aggregate operation* or new wayside pits and quarries may only be permitted in other *key natural heritage features* and *key hydrologic features* not identified in 4.3.2.3 (a) and any *vegetation protection zone* associated with such other feature where the application demonstrates:
        i. How the Water Resource System will be protected or enhanced; and
        ii. That the specific provisions in 4.3.2.5 (c), (d) and 4.3.2.6 (c) have been addressed, and that they will be met by the operation; and
    c) Any application for a new *mineral aggregate operation*, or the expansion of an existing *mineral aggregate operation* shall be required to demonstrate:
        i. How the *connectivity* between *key natural heritage features* and *key hydrologic features* will be maintained before, during and after the extraction of mineral aggregates;
        ii. How the operator could immediately replace any habitat that would be lost from the site with equivalent habitat on another part of the site or on adjacent lands; and

iii. How the Water Resource System will be protected or enhanced; and

d) An application for the expansion of an existing *mineral aggregate operation* may be permitted in the Natural Heritage System, including *key natural heritage features* and *key hydrologic features*, and in any associated *vegetation protection zone* only if the related decision is consistent with the PPS.

4. The Ministry of Natural Resources will pursue the following under the *Aggregate Resources Act*, for all *mineral aggregate operations*, including wayside pits and quarries, within the Protected Countryside:
   a) Rehabilitated area will be maximized and disturbed area minimized on an ongoing basis during the life-cycle of an operation;
   b) Progressive and final rehabilitation efforts will contribute to the goals of the Greenbelt Plan;
   c) The Ministry of Natural Resources will determine the maximum allowable disturbed area of each *mineral aggregate operation*. Any excess disturbed area above the maximum will be required to be rehabilitated. For existing operations this shall be completed within 10 years of the date of approval of the Greenbelt Plan, and 50% completed within six years. For new operations, including expansions, the total disturbed area shall not exceed an established maximum allowable disturbed area; and
   d) An application for a *mineral aggregate operation* or wayside pits and quarries may be permitted only where the applicant demonstrates that the quantity and quality of groundwater and surface water will be maintained as per Provincial Standards under the *Aggregate Resources Act*.

5. When operators are undertaking rehabilitation of *mineral aggregate operation* sites in the Protected Countryside, the following provisions apply:
   a) The aggregate industry will work with the Ministry of Natural Resources to consider the development and implementation of comprehensive rehabilitation plans in areas of high concentration of *mineral aggregate operations*;
   b) The disturbed area of a site will be rehabilitated to a state of equal or greater *ecological value*, and for the entire site, long-term ecological integrity will be maintained or restored, and to the extent possible, improved;
   c) If there are *key natural heritage features* or *key hydrologic features* on the site, or if such features existed on the site at the time of application:
      i. The health, diversity and size of these *key natural heritage features* and *key hydrologic features* will be maintained or

restored and, to the extent possible, improved to promote a net gain of ecological health; and

ii. Any permitted extraction of mineral aggregates that occurs in a feature will be completed, and the area will be rehabilitated, as early as possible in the life of the operation.

d) Aquatic areas remaining after extraction are to be rehabilitated to aquatic enhancement, which shall be representative of the natural ecosystem in that particular setting or ecodistrict, and the combined terrestrial and aquatic rehabilitation shall meet the intent of 4.3.2.5 (c).

e) Outside the Natural Heritage System, and except as provided in 4.3.2.5 (b), (c) and (d), final rehabilitation will appropriately reflect the long-term land use of the general area, taking into account applicable policies of this Plan and, to the extent permitted under this Plan, existing municipal and provincial policies.

6. Final rehabilitation in the Natural Heritage System will meet these additional provisions:
   a) Where there is no underwater extraction, an amount of land equal to that under natural vegetated cover prior to extraction, and no less than 35% of each license, is to be rehabilitated to forest cover, which shall be representative of the natural ecosystem in that particular setting or ecodistrict;
   b) Where there is underwater extraction, no less than 35% of the non-aquatic lands of each license is to be rehabilitated to forest cover, which shall be representative of the natural ecosystem in that particular setting or ecodistrict; and
   c) Rehabilitation will be implemented so that the connectivity of the *key natural heritage features* and the *key hydrologic features* on the site and on adjacent lands will be maintained or restored, and to the extent possible, improved.

7. Operators are encouraged to consider and provide for public access to former aggregate sites upon final rehabilitation.

8. Notwithstanding any provision of this section to the contrary, within the *specialty crop areas* identified on Schedule 2 as the Niagara Peninsula Tender Fruit and Grape Area, *mineral aggregate operations* and wayside pits and quarries are subject to the following requirements:
   a) No new *mineral aggregate operation*, wayside pits and quarries or any ancillary or accessory use thereto will be permitted between Lake Ontario and the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area;
   b) A new *mineral aggregate operation* or wayside permit may only be considered on primary and secondary selected sand and gravel resources on the Fonthill Kame, in the Town of Pelham, as

identified by Aggregate Resource Inventory Paper #4, if the applicant demonstrates that:

i. Substantially the same land area will be rehabilitated back to an agricultural condition which allows for the same range and productivity of specialty crops common in the area; and,
ii. The microclimate on which the site and the surrounding area may be dependent for specialty crop production will be maintained.

c) A new *mineral aggregate operation* or the expansion of an existing operation shall only be permitted in areas not identified in 4.3.2.9 (a) and (b) where the applicant demonstrates the following:

i. The physical characteristics of the proposed site allow for the rehabilitation of the property back to an agricultural condition, which allows for the same range and productivity of specialty crops common in the area, and allow for the microclimate on which the site and the surrounding area may be dependent for specialty crop production to be maintained; or
ii. If the physical characteristics of the proposed site will not allow for the rehabilitation of the property back to an agricultural condition, which allows for the same range and productivity of specialty crops common in the area, and will not allow for the microclimate on which the site and the surrounding area may be dependent for specialty crop production to be maintained, the applicant shall consider alternative locations; and
iii. Where other alternatives have been considered by the applicant and found unsuitable, and in situations where complete agricultural rehabilitation in the *specialty crop area* is not possible due to the depth of planned extraction or a substantial aggregate deposit below the water table warranting extraction, agricultural rehabilitation in the remaining licensed area will be maximized as a first priority to allow production of specialty crops.

9. Where a municipality has undertaken a comprehensive aggregate resource management study and implemented the results into its official plan prior to establishment of this Plan, such policies shall be deemed to conform to this Plan.

10. Municipalities should ensure that all land use activities related to the post extraction rehabilitation of mineral aggregate operations are consistent with any relevant approved source protection plan and relevant watershed or sub-watershed plan.

4.4 Cultural Heritage Resources

For lands within the Protected Countryside, the following policies shall apply:

1. Cultural heritage resources are defined as man-made or natural features, including structures, objects, neighbourhoods, landscapes and archaeological sites, that have been identified as *significant* by the local municipality or the province for being meaningful components of a community's cultural heritage or identity.

2. Greenbelt municipalities should work with aboriginal groups and other stakeholders to identify and protect cultural heritage resources and plan toward maintaining, developing and using these resources in a manner that will benefit the local community and be compatible with the Greenbelt's vision and goals.

3. Municipalities should build cultural components into their municipal plans and planning processes, including creating inventories of cultural heritage resources and planning for their ongoing protection and appropriate use. Municipal cultural plans should draw from and promote an integrated vision of local cultural development that emphasizes connections across the full range of arts, heritage, cultural industries, libraries, archives and other cultural activity.

4.5 Existing Uses

For lands falling within the Protected Countryside, the following policies shall apply:

1. All *existing uses* lawfully used for such purpose on the day before the Greenbelt Plan comes into force are permitted.

2. Single dwellings are permitted on existing lots of record, provided they were zoned for such as of the date the Greenbelt Plan came into force, or where an application for an amendment to a zoning by-law is required as a condition of a severance granted prior to December 14, 2003 but which application did not proceed.

3. Outside of *settlement areas*, expansions to existing buildings and structures, accessory structures and uses, and/or conversions of legally *existing uses* which bring the use more into conformity with this Plan, are permitted subject to a demonstration of the following:
    a) Notwithstanding section 4.2.2.6, new municipal services are not required; and

b) The use does not expand into *key natural heritage features* and *key hydrologic features*, unless there is no other alternative in which case any expansion shall be limited in scope and kept within close geographical proximity to the existing structure.

4. Expansions to existing agricultural buildings and structures, residential dwellings, and accessory uses to both, may be considered within *key natural heritage features* and *key hydrologic features* if it is demonstrated that:
   a) There is no alternative and the expansion, alteration or establishment is directed away from the feature to the maximum extent possible; and
   b) The impact of the expansion or alteration on the feature and its functions is minimized to the maximum extent possible.

5. Expansion, maintenance and/or replacement of existing *infrastructure* is permitted, subject to the *infrastructure* policies of section 4.2.

4.6 Lot Creation

For lands falling within the Protected Countryside, the following policies shall apply:

1. Lot creation is permitted in the Protected Countryside for the range of uses permitted by the policies of this Plan.

2. Lot creation is also permitted in the following circumstances:
   a) Acquiring land for *infrastructure* purposes, subject to the *infrastructure* policies of section 4.2;
   b) Facilitating conveyances to public bodies or non-profit entities for natural heritage conservation, provided it does not create a separate lot for a residential dwelling in *specialty crop* or *prime agricultural areas*; and
   c) Minor lot adjustments or boundary additions, provided they do not create a separate lot for a residential dwelling in *specialty crop* or *prime agricultural areas* and there is no increased fragmentation of a *key natural heritage feature* or *key hydrologic feature*.

3. More specifically, within the *specialty crop area* and *prime agricultural area*, lot creation is permitted for:
   a) Agricultural uses where the severed and retained lots are intended for agricultural uses and provided the minimum lot size is 40 acres within *specialty crop area* and 100 acres within *prime agricultural areas*;
   b) Existing and new agriculture-related uses, provided that any new lot will be limited to the minimum size needed to accommodate

the use, including a sewage and water system appropriate for such a use;

c) The severance of a *residence surplus to a farming operation* as a result of a *farm consolidation*, which residence was an *existing use* as of the date this Plan came into force, provided that the planning authority ensures that a residential dwelling is not permitted in perpetuity on the retained lot of farmland created by this severance. Approaches to ensuring no new residential dwellings on the retained lot of farmland may be recommended by the Province, or municipal approaches that achieve the same objective should be considered; or

d) The surplus dwelling policy in 4.6.3 (c) also applies to *rural areas* as defined by municipal official plans. The severance should be limited to the minimum size needed to accommodate the dwelling, including existing and reserve areas for individual sewage and water services.

5.0 IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Status and Effect

The *Greenbelt Act, 2005*, provides for the establishment of the Greenbelt Plan to be created through an Order in Council, which was filed as OIC XXX/05. The *Greenbelt Act, 2005*, also requires that all decisions on planning applications shall conform to the policies in the Greenbelt Plan.

The policies of this Plan do not affect any Aboriginal or treaty right recognized or affirmed by *The Constitution Act, 1982*. The Ontario government shall consult with Aboriginal peoples about decisions that may affect the use of Crown land and resources within the area of the Greenbelt Plan that are subject to Aboriginal treaty rights.

The Greenbelt Plan, including the Introduction, Descriptions, Definitions and Schedules, together with the text and commentary in sections 2.0 and 5.0, shall be read in its entirety and applied in each situation.

5.2 Transition

The *Greenbelt Act, 2005*, requires that decisions with respect to applications made under the *Ontario Planning and Development Act, 1994*, the *Planning Act* or the *Condominium Act, 1998*, which were commenced on or after December 16, 2004 (the date this Plan came into force) and relate to the areas in this Plan designated as Protected Countryside, are required to conform to all applicable policies and provisions of this Plan.

The *Greenbelt Act, 2005*, authorizes the Minister to pass regulations for various prescribed matters to address applications which were commenced prior to December 16, 2004 but for which no decision has been made and for other transitional matters, including the application of prescribed polices for applications made under the *Ontario Planning and Development Act, 1994*, the *Planning Act* or the *Condominium Act, 1998*, which were commenced before December 16, 2004. In addition to such regulations, the *settlement area* policies of section 3.4 of this Plan, as well as those within this section 5.0, provide further direction on how this Plan applies to *existing uses*, applications in process and previous site-specific approvals.

Municipalities should consider the policies of the Greenbelt Plan, as appropriate, when processing applications that are not required to conform to this Plan.

5.2.1 Decisions on Applications Related to Previous Site Specific Approvals

Where an official plan was amended prior to December 16, 2004 to specifically designate land use(s), this approval may continue to be recognized through the conformity exercise addressed in section 5.3 and any further applications required under the *Planning Act* or *Condominium Act, 1998,* to implement the official plan approval are not required to conform with this Plan.

Where a zoning by-law was amended prior to December 16, 2004 to specifically permit land use(s), this approval may continue to be recognized through the conformity exercise described in section 5.3 and any further applications required under the *Planning Act* or *Condominium Act, 1998,* to implement the use permitted by the zoning by-law are not required to conform with this Plan.

Applications to further amend the site-specific official plan or zoning by-law permissions referred to above, for uses similar to or more in conformity with the provision of this Plan are also permitted. All such applications should, where possible, seek to achieve or improve conformity with this Plan.

5.3 Municipal Implementation of Protected Countryside Policies

The *Greenbelt Act, 2005*, provides two main avenues for implementation of the Greenbelt Plan. First, section 7 of the *Greenbelt Act, 2005*, requires municipal and other decisions under the *Planning Act* or the *Condominium Act, 1998,* to conform to the policies in the Greenbelt Plan. Second, section 9 of the *Greenbelt Act, 2005*, requires municipalities to amend their official plan(s) to conform to the Greenbelt Plan.

Municipal official plans shall contain policies that reflect the requirements of this Plan together with a map(s) showing the boundaries of the Greenbelt Area, the Protected Countryside and the Natural Heritage System. Municipalities should provide a map showing known *key natural heritage* and *key hydrologic features* and any associated minimum *vegetation protection zones* identified in this Plan. The identification of the Natural Heritage System boundary will form the basis for applying the policies of section 3.2.

Municipalities should also include a map of *wellhead protection areas* and *vulnerable* areas together with associated policies for these areas within their official plans, as appropriate and in accordance with any provincial directives on source water protection.

Despite the policies in this Greenbelt Plan, there is nothing in this Plan that limits the ability of decision makers on planning applications to adopt policies that are more stringent than the requirements of the Plan, unless doing so would conflict with any of the policies or objectives of the Plan. With the exception of the lot

creation policies of section 4.6, official plans and zoning by-laws shall not, however, contain provisions that are more restrictive than the policies of sections 3.1 and 4.3.2 as they apply to agricultural uses and mineral aggregate resources respectively.

Municipalities may amend the designation for *prime agricultural areas* and/or *rural areas* at the time they bring their official plans into conformity with this Plan, only in the following circumstances:

1. If the upper-tier or single-tier municipality has not amended the designation for its prime agriculture/rural lands to reflect the PPS;
2. If an upper-tier or single-tier has completed a comprehensive official plan review; or
3. In order for a lower tier official plan to conform to an upper tier plan which has been amended in either of the above circumstances.

Such amendments are intended to be minor in nature, solely with a view to rationalizing *prime agricultural area* and *rural area* boundaries.

It is intended that the numerical figures identified in this Plan be considered to be approximate, and that for the purposes of preparing area municipal official plans, zoning by-laws, subdivisions approvals, site plan approvals, severances or building permits, minor deviations may be permitted, without amendment to this Plan, provided that such deviations do not alter the intent of this Plan.

5.4 Relationship of the Plan to the Land Use Planning System

The Greenbelt is governed by the planning policy and regulation, of various levels of government and agencies, which work collectively to manage and guide land use within the Greenbelt.

Provincially, the policies of the NEP, the ORMCP, the Parkway Belt West Plan, and the Protected Countryside policies in this Greenbelt Plan form the fundamental planning framework within which all other planning policies and regulations are contained.

This Greenbelt Plan builds upon the existing policy framework established in the PPS and is to be implemented through municipal official plan policies and maps.

The Greenbelt Plan relies on definitions contained in the PPS where those terms are used in this Plan. All terms defined in the definitions section of this Plan are shown in *italics*, and for ease of use terms defined in the PPS are also included. The Greenbelt Plan also relies on municipal official plan mapping to delineate *prime agricultural areas*, *rural areas* and the detailed boundaries of *settlement areas*.

In addition to the PPS and municipal official plans and related planning mechanisms (e.g. zoning, subdivision of land), conservation authorities, other agencies and the Federal Government have regulations or standards that apply in the Greenbelt. Where an application, matter or proceeding related to these regulations or standards requires consideration of applicable policy, such applications, matters or proceedings shall conform to this Greenbelt Plan together with other provincial plans applying within the Greenbelt. Where there are regulations or standards that are more restrictive than those contained in these plans, the more restrictive provision prevails.

Based on the above, the Greenbelt Plan must be read in conjunction with all other applicable land use planning policy, regulations and/or standards, as amended from time to time. Such documents include but are not limited to: the PPS; Minister's zoning orders under the *Planning* Act; other provincial land use plans; upper, lower and single-tier municipal official plans; zoning by-laws; regulations such as those under the *Conservation Authorities Act*, as well as other pertinent legislation (e.g. the federal *Fisheries Act)* and regulations. Where more specific provincial plans or regulations exist or are promulgated within the Greenbelt, including plans under the *Ontario Planning and Development Act, 1994*, the more specific plan or regulation prevails.

The Greenbelt Plan itself must also be read in its entirety as existing or proposed land uses may be subject to policies within different sections of the Plan. Where multiple policies apply, these are to be applied in either a cumulative or integrated manner, such that all of the policies that relate to a matter are addressed, with the more specific or restrictive policy applying where there are conflicts. Policies are not meant to be read in isolation or to the exclusion of the rest of the policies, both general and specific. As well, the schedules within the Greenbelt Plan need to be read to determine the applicable policies within the Plan relating to the various designations, information and/or boundaries shown on these schedules.

5.5 Boundaries, Schedules and Appendices

5.5.1 Boundary of the Greenbelt Plan

The Boundary of the Greenbelt Plan as shown on Schedules 1 and 4 of the Greenbelt Plan is prescribed by Ontario Regulation XX/XX, as provided by the *Greenbelt Act, 2005.*

The boundary of the Greenbelt Plan as described in Ontario Regulation XX/XX provides the information for establishing the boundary on the ground by a Licensed Ontario Land Surveyor (under instructions from the Surveyor General for the Province of Ontario).

5.5.2 Boundaries Internal to the Greenbelt Plan

Boundaries of the Natural Heritage System may be refined at the time of municipal conformity in accordance with the Natural Heritage System policies of section 3.2.2.6.

Boundaries of the *prime agricultural areas* and *rural areas* are as established in municipal official plans, subject to section 5.3.

Boundaries of Towns/Villages are shown on the Schedules to this Plan but for detailed delineation and the boundaries of hamlets, which are only shown as symbols, reference must be made to municipal official plans.

Boundaries of *key natural heritage features* and *key hydrologic features* and any minimum *vegetation protection zones* identified in this Plan are to be shown in municipal official plans. The detailed delineation of these features and zones can be undertaken by municipalities and/or conservation authorities when dealing with applications for development under the *Planning Act* or *Condominium Act, 1998* or via a municipal zoning by-law update.

5.5.3 Schedules and Appendices

The Greenbelt Plan contains four schedules, identifying:

1. The Greenbelt Plan area, which delineates the NEP Area, the Oak Ridges Moraine Area and Protected Countryside Area (including Towns/Villages and Hamlets);
2. The boundary of the Niagara Peninsula Tender Fruit and Grape Area;
3. The boundary of the Holland Marsh; and
4. The Natural Heritage System.

In addition, the Plan contains two maps in an Appendix, for reference.

5.6 Plan Review

Through the requirement for a 10-year review, the province is ensuring that the Greenbelt Plan will not remain static and will not become irrelevant over time. The 10-year review of the Greenbelt Plan will be coordinated with the reviews of the NEP and the ORMCP, which includes any adjustments necessary to align the timing of these reviews.

The purpose of the review is to assess the effectiveness of the policies contained in the Plan (using information gathered through the monitoring program, and conducted through a public process), and make amendments, if appropriate, to update or include new information or improve the effectiveness and relevance of the policies.

The review can only consider modifications to the urban boundaries within the Greenbelt if the upper or single-tier municipality provides a comprehensive justification or growth management study.

5.7 Amendments to Greenbelt Plan and other Provincial Plans

Under the *Greenbelt Act, 2005*, amendments to those areas of the Plan designated as Protected Countryside can only be proposed by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Amendments are subject to the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

Amendments to the Plan shall not have the effect of reducing the total land area of the Greenbelt Plan.

Amendments could be considered outside the 10-year review in the following circumstances:

1. There are major unforeseen circumstances, or major new Provincial policy, legislation or regulation that create the need for an amendment;
2. The overall effectiveness and integrity of the Plan would be threatened if the amendment were deferred to the next 10-year review; or
3. The effectiveness and/or relevance of the Plan's policies would be improved through an amendment.

Amendments to the NEP remain governed by, and are to be dealt in accordance with, the provisions of the *Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act*.

Amendments to the ORMCP remain governed by, and are to be dealt in accordance with, the *Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, 2001*.

Amendments to the Parkway Belt West Plan remain governed by, and are to be dealt in accordance with, *the Ontario Planning and Development Act, 1994*, but are also subject to the policies of sections 2.0, 3.2 and 3.3 of this Plan.

5.8 Monitoring/Performance Measures

The objective of the monitoring framework is to evaluate the effectiveness of the policies of the Plan in achieving its goals, as identified in section 1.2.

Performance measures are to be established through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing's Municipal Performance Measurement Program.

In this regard, the Ontario Government will work with other ministries, municipalities and stakeholders to:

1. Identify appropriate performance indicators to measure the effectiveness of the Plan;

2. Identify roles and responsibilities among partners in the collection and analysis of the indicators; and
3. Provide for periodic collation, publication and discussion of the results.

5.9 Greenbelt Council

The Province will establish a Greenbelt Council and provide it with a varied mandate, which could evolve over time. Initially, it is anticipated that the Greenbelt Council will consider how the implementation of the plan is proceeding, including the identification of issues arising from implementation.

The Greenbelt Council will also provide input and advice on the identification and establishment of performance measures, which will be used to track the success of the Greenbelt Plan in achieving its goals. Such advice should take advantage of the local knowledge of the Council's members and other stakeholders, with a view to identifying the most effective and least costly performance measures that build on the ability of local communities and associations to provide meaningful input and information.

Over the short to mid term, the Council could play a meaningful role in helping to coordinate efforts of municipalities, conservation authorities, associations and other stakeholders in matters which cross municipal boundaries such as trail systems, water resources, *watershed plans* and programs and agricultural activities. The Greenbelt Council could also provide advice on ways of promoting the Greenbelt and on any amendments proposed to the Plan.

Over the long-term and particularly as the time for the 10-year review of the Greenbelt Plan approaches, it is expected that the Greenbelt Council will play an important role in helping to shape and/or focus the nature and/or content of the review. This could be achieved through Council conducting its own public process to obtain stakeholder views by consulting with municipalities and other stakeholder groups, which would then form the basis for the government to frame the formal review required by the proposed *Greenbelt Act, 2005.*

Definitions

Agricultural uses

Means the growing of crops, including nursery and horticultural crops; raising of livestock; raising of other animals for food, fur or fibre, including poultry and fish; aquaculture; apiaries; agro-forestry; maple syrup production; and associated on-farm buildings and structures, including accommodation for full-time farm labour when the size and nature of the operation requires additional employment (PPS, 2005).

Agricultural-related uses

Means those farm-related commercial and farm-related industrial uses that are small scale and directly related to the farm operation and are required in close proximity to the farm operation (PPS, 2005).

Alvars

Naturally open areas of thin or no soil over essentially flat limestone, dolostone or marble rock, supporting a sparse vegetation cover of mostly shrubs and herbs.

Connectivity

Means the degree to which *key natural heritage or key hydrologic features* are connected to one another by links such as plant and animal movement corridors, hydrologic and nutrient cycling, genetic transfer, and energy flow through food webs.

Development

Means the creation of a new lot, a change in land use, or the construction of buildings and structures, any of which require approval under the *Planning Act*, or that are subject to the *Environmental Assessment Act*, but does not include:

a) The construction of facilities for transportation, infrastructure and utilities used by a public body;
b) Activities or works under the *Drainage Act*; or
c) The carrying out of agricultural practices on land that was being used for agricultural uses on the date the Plan came into effect (PPS, 2005).

Ecological function

Means the natural processes, products or services that living and non-living environments provide or perform within or between species, ecosystems and landscapes, including hydrologic functions and biological, physical, chemical and socio-economic interactions (PPS, 2005).

Ecological value

The value of vegetation in maintaining the health of the *key natural heritage* or *key hydrologic feature* and the related ecological features and *ecological functions*, as measured by factors such as the diversity of species, the diversity of habitats, and the suitability and amount of habitats that are available for rare, threatened and endangered species.

Endangered species

Means a species that is listed or categorized as an "Endangered Species" on the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources' official species at risk list, as updated and amended from time to time (PPS, 2005).

Existing uses

Uses legally established prior to the date that the Greenbelt Plan came into force. Existing agricultural accessory buildings and structures including farm dwellings can expand on the same lot subject to the provisions of the municipal zoning by-law.

Farm consolidation

Means the acquisition of additional farm parcels to be operated as one farm operation.

Fish habitat

As defined in the *Fisheries Act*, c. F-14, means spawning grounds and nursery, rearing, food supply, and migration areas on which fish depend directly or indirectly in order to carry out their life processes (PPS, 2005).

Hazardous land

Means property or lands that could be unsafe for development due to naturally occurring processes. Along the shorelines of the Great Lakes - St. Lawrence River System, this means the land, including that covered by water, between the international boundary, where applicable, and the furthest landward limit of the flooding hazard, erosion hazard or dynamic beach hazard limits. Along the shorelines of large inland lakes, this means the land, including that covered by water, between a defined offshore distance or depth and the furthest landward limit of the flooding hazard, erosion hazard or dynamic beach hazard limits. Along river, stream and small inland lake systems, this means the land, including that covered by water, to the furthest landward limit of the flooding hazard or erosion hazard limits (PPS, 2005).

Hydrologic function

Means the functions of the hydrological cycle that include the occurrence, circulation, distribution and chemical and physical properties of water on the surface of the land, in the soil and underlying rocks, and in the atmosphere, and water's interaction with the environment including its relation to living things (PPS, 2005).

Infrastructure

Means physical structures (facilities or corridors) that form the foundation for development or resource use. *Infrastructure* includes: sewage and water systems, sewage treatment systems, waste management systems, electric power generation and transmission including *renewable energy systems*, communications/telecommunications, transit and transportation corridors and facilities, oil and gas pipelines and associated facilities.

Intensification

Means the development of a property, site or area at a higher density than currently exists through:

a) Redevelopment, including the reuse of brownfield sites;
b) The development of vacant and/or underutilized lots within previously developed areas;
c) Infill development; and
d) The expansion or conversion of existing buildings

(PPS, 2005).

Intermittent streams

Stream-related watercourses that contain water or are dry at times of the year that are more or less predictable, generally flowing during wet seasons of the year but not the entire year, and where the water table is above the stream bottom during parts of the year.

Key hydrologic features

Means a key hydrologic feature as described in section 3.2.4.

Key natural heritage features

Means a key natural heritage feature as described in section 3.2.4.

Lake

Means any inland body of standing water, usually fresh water, larger than a pool or pond or a body of water filling a depression in the earth's surface.

Landform features

Means distinctive physical attributes of land such as slope, shape, elevation and relief.

Life science areas of natural and scientific interest (ANSIs)

Means an area(s) that has been:

a) Identified as having life science values related to protection, scientific study or education; and
b) Further identified by the Ministry of Natural Resources using evaluation procedures established by that Ministry, as amended from time to time.

Major recreational uses

Major recreational uses are recreational uses that require large-scale modification of terrain, vegetation or both and usually also require large-scale buildings or structures, including but not limited to the following: golf courses; serviced playing fields; serviced campgrounds; and ski hills.

Mineral aggregate operation

Means:

a) An operation, other than *wayside pits and quarries,* conducted under a licence or permit under the *Aggregate Resources Act,* or successors thereto; and
b) Associated facilities used in extraction, transport, beneficiation, processing or recycling of mineral aggregate resources and derived products such as asphalt and concrete, or the production of secondary related products.

Minimum distance separation formulae

Means formulae developed by the Province to separate uses so as to reduce incompatibility concerns about odour from livestock facilities (PPS, 2005).

Municipal sewage services

Means a sewage works within the meaning of section 1 of the *Ontario Water Resources Act* that is owned or operated by a municipality (PPS, 2005).

Municipal water services

Means a municipal drinking-water system within the meaning of section 2 of the Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002 (PPS, 2005).

Natural self-sustaining vegetation

Means vegetation dominated by native plant species that can grow and persist without direct human management, protection, or tending.

Negative impact(s)

Means:

a) In regard to water, degradation to the quality or quantity of surface or ground water, key hydrologic features or vulnerable areas, and their related hydrologic functions, due to single, multiple or successive development or site alteration activities;

b) In regard to *fish habitat*, the harmful alteration, disruption or destruction of *fish habitat*, except where, in conjunction with the appropriate authorities, it has been authorized under the Fisheries Act, using the guiding principle of no net loss of productive capacity; and

c) In regard to other natural heritage features and areas, degradation that threatens the health and integrity of the natural features or *ecological functions* for which an area is identified due to single, multiple or successive development or site alteration activities.

(PPS, 2005)

New multiple units or multiple lots for residential dwellings

Means the creation of more than three units or lots through either plan of subdivision, consent or plan of condominium.

Normal farm practices

Means a practice, as defined in the *Farming and Food Production Protection Act, 1998*, that is conducted in a manner consistent with proper and acceptable customs and standards as established and followed by similar agricultural operations under similar circumstances; or makes use of innovative technology in a manner consistent with proper advanced farm management practices. Normal farm practices shall be consistent with the *Nutrient Management Act, 2002* and regulations made under that Act (PPS, 2005).

Permanent stream

Means a stream that continually flows in an average year.

Prime agricultural areas

Means areas where prime agricultural lands (specialty crop lands and/or Canada Land Inventory Classes 1, 2, and 3 soils) predominate. This includes: areas of prime agricultural lands and associated Canada Land Inventory Class 4-7 soils; and additional areas where there is a local concentration of farms which exhibit characteristics of ongoing agriculture. *Prime agricultural areas* may be identified by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food using evaluation procedures established by the Province as amended from time to time; or may also be identified through an alternative agricultural land evaluation system approved by the Province (PPS, 2005).

Private communal sewage services

Means a sewage works within the meaning of section 1 of the *Ontario Water Resources Act* that serves six or more lots or private residences and is not owned by a municipality (PPS, 2005).

Private communal water services

Means a non-municipal drinking-water system within the meaning of section 2 of the *Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002* that serves six or more lots or private residences (PPS, 2005).

Renewable energy systems

Means the production of electrical power from an energy source that is renewed by natural processes including, but not limited to, wind, water, a biomass resource or product, or solar and geothermal energy (PPS, 2005).

Residence surplus to a farm operation

Means an existing farm residence that is rendered surplus as a result of *farm consolidation* (the acquisition of additional farm parcels to be operated as one farm operation) (PPS, 2005).

Rural areas

Means lands in the rural area which are located outside *settlement areas* and which are outside *prime agricultural areas* (PPS, 2005).

Sand barrens

Means land (not including land that is being used for agricultural purposes or no longer exhibits sand barrens characteristics) that:

a) Has sparse or patchy vegetation that is dominated by plants that are:
   i. Adapted to severe drought and low nutrient levels; and
   ii. Maintained by severe environmental limitations such as drought, low nutrient levels and periodic disturbances such as fire;
b) Has less than 25 per cent tree cover;
c) Has sandy soils (other than shorelines) exposed by natural erosion, depositional process or both; and
d) Has been further identified, by the Ministry of Natural Resources or by any other person, according to evaluation procedures established by the Ministry of Natural Resources, as amended from time to time.

Savannah

Means land (not including land that is being used for agricultural purposes or no longer exhibits savannah characteristics) that:

a) Has vegetation with a significant component of non-woody plants, including tallgrass prairie species that are maintained by seasonal drought, periodic disturbances such as fire, or both;
b) Has from 25 per cent to 60 per cent tree cover;
c) Has mineral soils; and
d) Has been further identified, by the Ministry of Natural Resources or by any other person, according to evaluation procedures established by the Ministry of Natural Resources, as amended from time to time.

Secondary uses

Means uses secondary to the principal use of the property, including but not limited to, home occupations, home industries, and uses that produce value-added agricultural products from the farm operation on the property (PPS, 2005).

Seepage areas and springs

Seepage areas and springs are sites of emergence of groundwater where the water table is present at the ground surface.

Settlement areas

Means urban areas and rural settlement areas within municipalities (such as cities, towns, villages and hamlets) that are:

a) Built up areas where development is concentrated and which have a mix of land uses; and
b) Lands which have been designated in an official plan for development (PPS. 2005).

Significant

Means:

a) In regard to wetlands and life science areas of natural and scientific interest, an area identified as provincially significant by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources using evaluation procedures established by the Province, as amended from time to time;
b) In regard to the habitat of *endangered species, threatened species* and *special concern species*, means the habitat, as approved by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, that is necessary for the maintenance, survival, and/or the recovery of naturally occurring or reintroduced populations of *endangered species, threatened species* or *special concern species*, and where those areas of occurrence are occupied or habitually occupied by the species during all or any part(s) of its life cycle;
c) In regard to woodlands, an area which is ecologically important in terms of features such as species composition,

age of trees and stand history; functionally important due to its contribution to the broader landscape because of its location, size or due to the amount of forest cover in the planning area; or economically important due to site quality, species composition, or past management history. The Province (Ministry of Natural Resources) identifies criteria relating to the forgoing; and

d) In regard to other features and areas in section 3.2.4 of this Plan, ecologically important in terms of features, functions, representation or amount, and contributing to the quality and diversity of the Natural Heritage System. The Province (Ministry of Natural Resources) identifies criteria relating to the forgoing.

e) In regard to cultural heritage and archaeology, resources that are valued for the important contribution they make to our understanding of the history of a place, an event, or a people.

While some significant resources may already be identified and inventoried by official sources, the significance of others can only be determined after evaluation.

Site alteration

Means activities such as filling, grading and excavation that would change the landform and natural vegetative characteristics of land, but does not include:

a) The construction of facilities for transportation, infrastructure and utilities uses by a public body;

b) Activities or works under the *Drainage Act*; or

c) The carrying out of agricultural practices on land that was being used for agricultural uses on the date the Plan came into effect.

Special concern species

Means a species that is listed or categorized as a "special concern species" on the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources' official species at risk list, as updated and amended from time to time.

Specialty crop areas

Means areas designated using evaluation procedures established by the province, as amended from time to time, where specialty crops such as tender fruits (peaches, cherries, plums), grapes, other fruit crops, vegetable crops, greenhouse crops, and crops from agriculturally developed organic soil lands are predominantly grown, usually resulting from:

a) Soils that have suitability to produce specialty crops, or lands that are subject to special climatic conditions, or a combination of both; and/or

b) A combination of farmers skilled in the production of specialty crops, and of capital investment in related facilities and services to produce, store, or process specialty crops.

(PPS, 2005).

Stable top of bank

Means the edge of the channel or bank, if there is a sharp change from the steep slope of the channel or bank to the shallower slope of the field area, or the normal full extent of the watercourse when it contains the maximum volume of water without flooding, if the change in slope does not exist.

Tallgrass prairies

Means land (not including land that is being used for agricultural purposes or no longer exhibits tallgrass prairie characteristics) that:

a) Has vegetation dominated by non-woody plants, including tallgrass prairie species that are maintained by seasonal drought, periodic disturbances such as fire, or both;
b) Has less than 25 per cent tree cover;
c) Has mineral soils; and
d) Has been further identified, by the Minister of Natural Resources or by any other person, according to evaluation procedures established by the Ministry of Natural Resources, as amended from time to time.

Threatened species

Means a species that is listed or categorized as a "Threatened Species" on the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources' official species at risk list, as updated and amended from time to time.

Total developable area

Means the total area of the property less the area occupied by *key natural heritage features* and *key hydrologic features*, including any related *Vegetation Protection Zone* (see section 3.2.3).

Valleylands

Means a natural area that occurs in a valley or other landform depression that has water flowing through or standing for some period of the year (PPS, 2005).

Vegetation protection zone

A vegetated buffer area surrounding a *key natural heritage feature* or *key hydrologic feature* within which only those land uses permitted within the feature itself are permitted. The width of the *vegetation protection zone* is to be determined when new development or *site alteration* occurs within 120 metres of a *key natural heritage feature* or *key hydrologic feature*, and

is to be of sufficient size to protect the feature and its functions from the impacts of the proposed change and associated activities that will occur before, during, and after, construction, and where possible, restore or enhance the feature and/or its function.

Vulnerable

Means surface and groundwater that can be easily changed or impacted by activities or events, either by virtue of their vicinity to such activities or events or by permissive pathways between such activities and the surface and/or groundwater (PPS, 2005).

Watershed plans

A watershed plan is a plan used for managing human activities and natural resources in an area defined by watershed boundaries. Watershed plans shall include, but are not limited to, the following components:

a) A water budget and conservation plan;
b) Land and water use and management strategies;
c) A framework for implementation;
d) An environmental monitoring plan;
e) Requirements for the use of environmental management practices and programs;
f) Criteria for evaluating the protection of water quality and quantity, and *key hydrologic features* and functions; and
g) Targets on a watershed or sub-watershed basis for the protection and restoration of riparian areas and the establishment of *natural self-sustaining vegetation.*

Wellhead protection areas

Means the surface and subsurface area surrounding a water well or well field that supplies a public water system and through which contaminants are reasonably likely to move so as eventually to reach the water well or well field.

Wetlands

Means land such as a swamp, marsh, bog or fen (not including land that is being used for agricultural purposes and no longer exhibits wetland characteristics) that:

a) Is seasonally or permanently covered by shallow water or has the water table close to or at the surface;
b) Has hydric soils and vegetation dominated by hydrophytic or water-tolerant plants; and
c) Has been further identified, by the Ministry of Natural Resources or by any other person, according to evaluation procedures established by the Ministry of Natural Resources, as amended from time to time.

Wildlife habitat

Means areas where plants, animals and other organisms live, and find adequate amounts of food, water, shelter and space needed to sustain their populations. Specific wildlife habitats of concern may include areas where species concentrate at a vulnerable point in their annual life cycle; and areas that are important to migratory and non-migratory species (PPS, 2005).

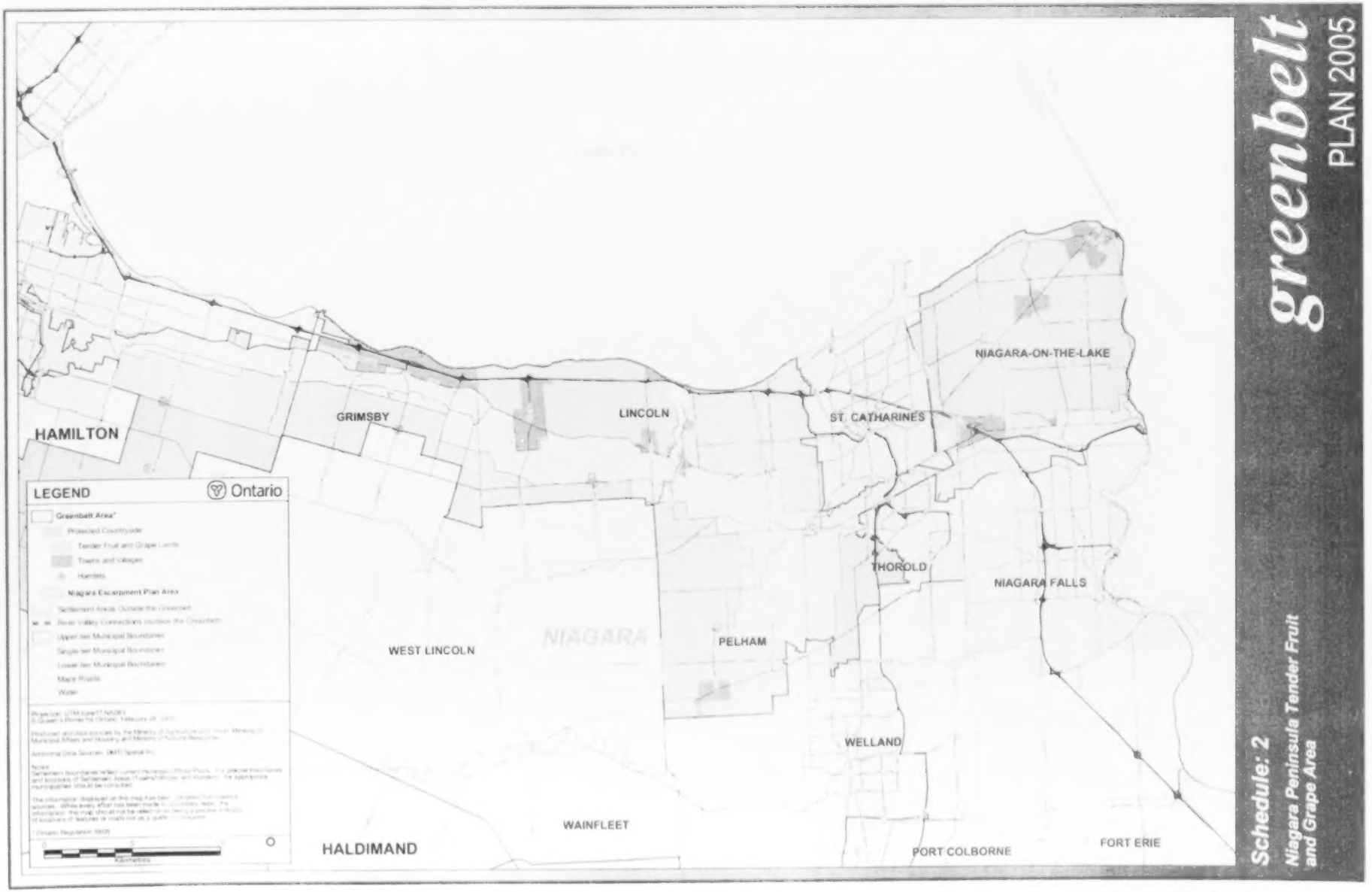
Woodlands

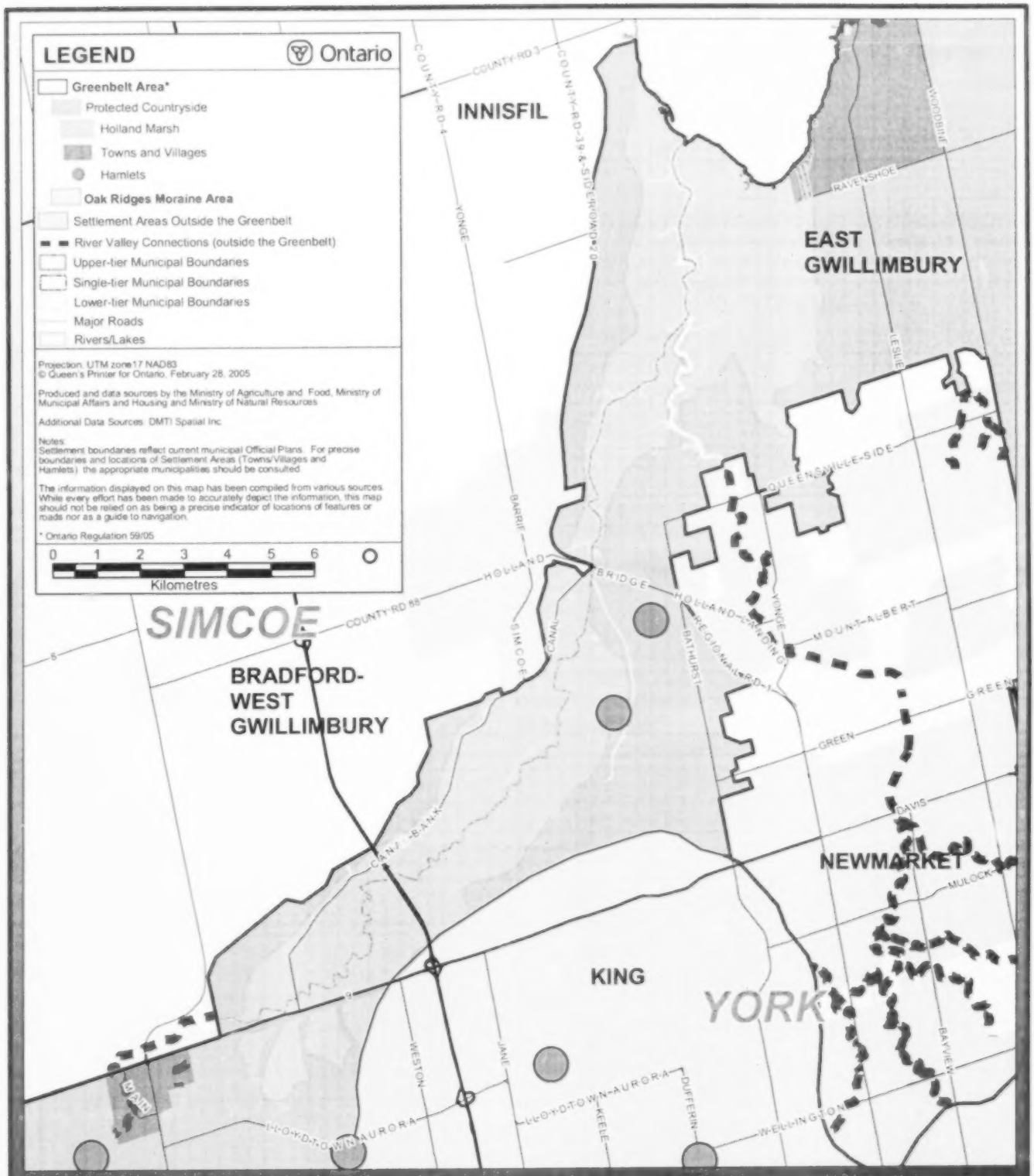
Means treed areas that provide environmental and economic benefits to both the private landowner and the general public, such as erosion prevention, hydrological and nutrient cycling, provision of clean air and the long-term storage of carbon, provision of *wildlife habitat*, outdoor recreational opportunities, and the sustainable harvest of a wide range of *woodland* products. *Woodlands* include treed areas, woodlots or forested areas (PPS, 2005).

Schedule 1:
Greenbelt Plan Area

greenbelt

PLAN 2005


greenbelt
PLAN 2005
Schedule: 2
Niagara Peninsula Tender Fruit and Grape Area
HAMILTON
GRIMSBY
LINCOLN
ST. CATHARINES
NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE
THOROLD
NIAGARA FALLS
PELHAM
WEST LINCOLN
NIAGARA
WELLAND
WAINFLEET
PORT COLBORNE
FORT ERIE
HALDIMAND
LEGEND
Ontario
Greenbelt Area*
Protected Countryside
Tender Fruit and Grape Lands
Towns and Villages
Hamlets
Niagara Escarpment Plan Area
Settlement Areas Outside the Greenbelt
River Valley Connections outside the Greenbelt
Upper-tier Municipal Boundaries
Single-tier Municipal Boundaries
Lower-tier Municipal Boundaries
Major Roads
Water
Kilometres



Schedule: 3

Holland Marsh

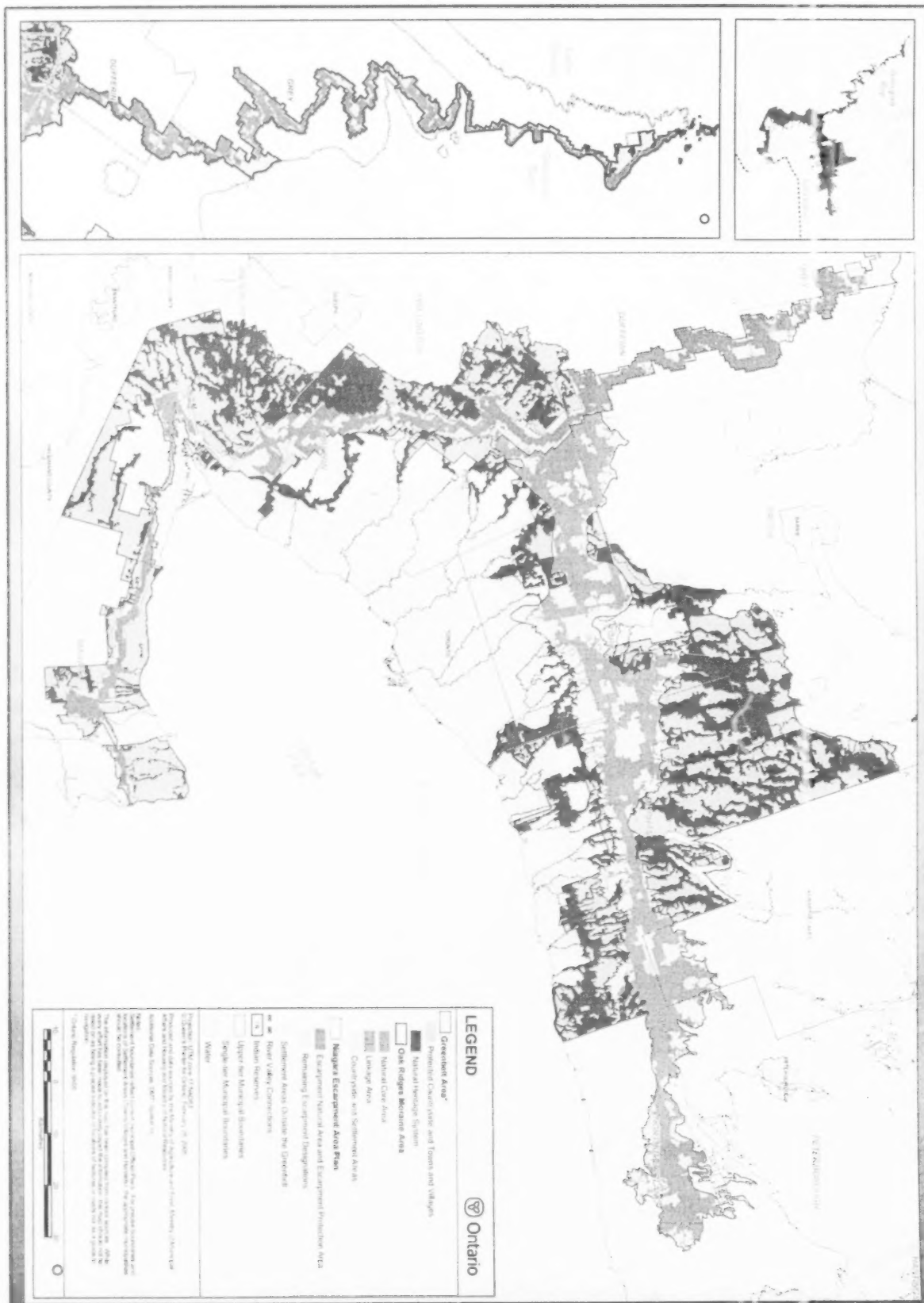
greenbelt

PLAN 2005

Schedule 4:

Natural Heritage System

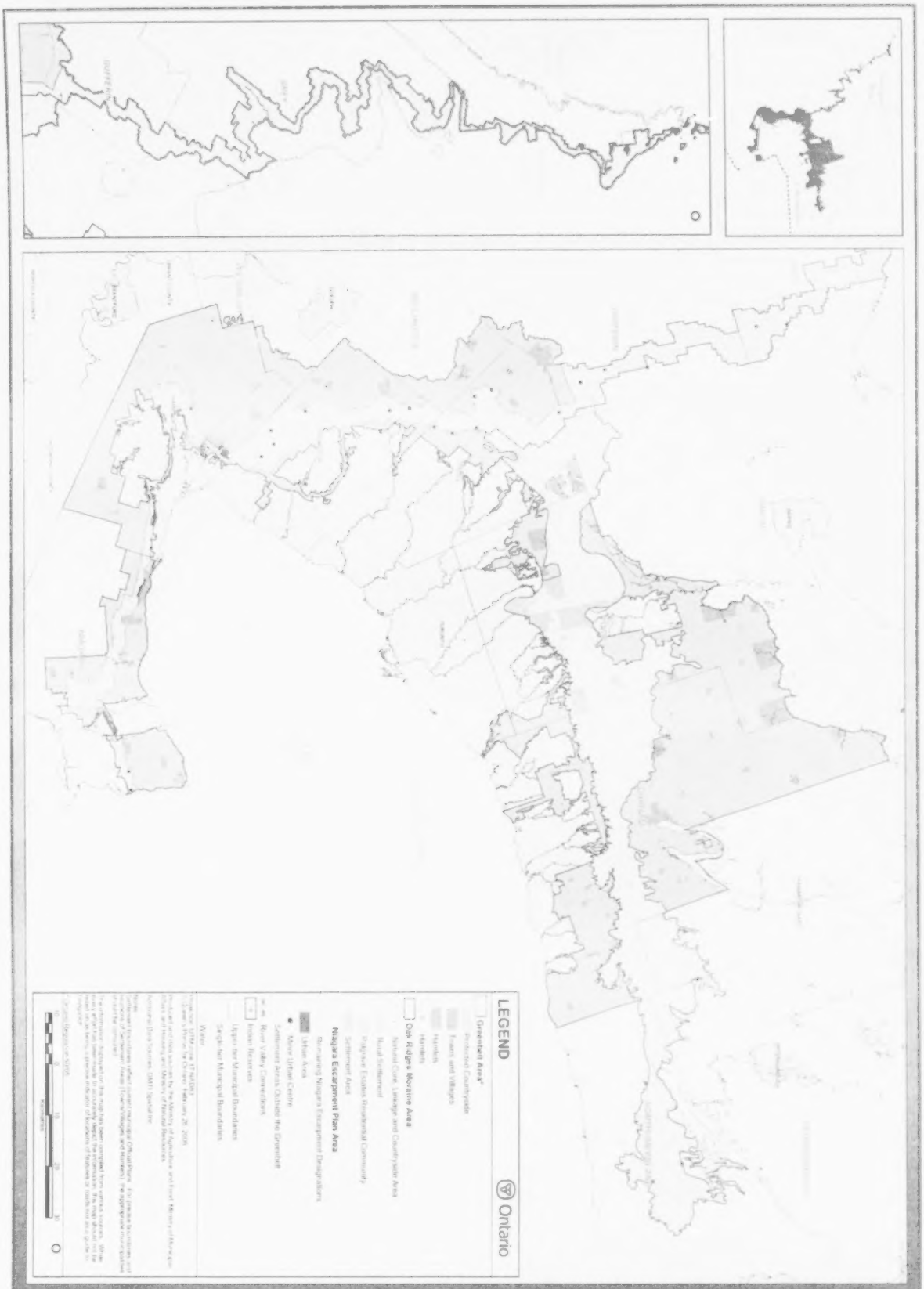
greenbelt
PLAN 2005



Appendix I:

Schematic showing natural system connections among the Protected Countryside, Niagara Escarpment and Oak Ridges Moraine

greenbelt
PLAN 2005



Appendix II:

Schematic showing settlements within Greenbelt Area

greenbelt
PLAN 2005